NON-VIOLENCE IN PEACE & WAR

Vol. II

M. K. GANDHI

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

In his introduction to Volume I of "Non-violence in Peace and War" published in 1942 Shri Mahadev Desai said:

> "......The same sap runs through all as the same passionate pursuit of Non-violence runs through Gandhiji's life as through all that he has thought and done, said and written. Let the student read, study, chew, and inwardly digest all that is included in this Volume, and he will find that there is revealed in it the organic growth of a vital rule of life as of a soul aspiring not only towards Self-realization, but also towards the emancipation of mankind from strife and bloodshed until, to use the words of Prof. Toynbee, 'Violence annihilates itself and leaves Gentleness alone in the field'."

If this was true about Gandhiji's writings on Non-violence up to 1942 it is much more so now. Readers will easily remember that the years between 1942 and 1948 saw the full flowering of Non-violence in Gandhiji's life. It was during this period that he undertook to ask the British to quit India and to 'do or die' in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta and Delhi and his practice of Non-violence culminated in his supreme sacrifice.

A chronological collection of Gandhiji's most important writings and utterances on Non-violence during this period is indispensable to all students of the growth of the practice of Non-violence in the 'mundane' fields of life. This volume II of "Non-violence in Peace and War" presents such a collection.

Lovers of Gandhian literature and students of Non-violence will be pleased to learn that all of Gandhiji's important writings on Non-violence are now available to them in these two volumes.

9-9-'49

EDITOR'S NOTE

Gandhiji's writings from 1920 to August 1942 on the subject of Non-violence were collected and published in a single volume in 1942. A second edition of it was brought out in 1944. The aim of the present volume is to bring together the rest of his writings on the subject.

As Gandhiji was in jail from August 9, 1942, he could not write for his paper, the *Harijan*, from that date. The paper itself was under a ban soon after. It was not till 1946 that it was allowed to be republished. So the present volume contains his writings from 1946 to the date of his death.

For a proper understanding of the views expressed by him here, it is necessary to know developments in the country since August 1942. India, which was rebellious ever since 1919 when Gandhiji took up the leadership, reached the breaking point in her relations with Britain in August 1942 when the Indian National Congress passed the 'Quit India' resolution. Her leaders were arrested in consequence. The people rose instantaneously in rebellion against the Government. Some of them broke out into violence, adopted secret methods, committed acts of sabotage, sought to paralyze the Government, and set up parallel governments of their own. That was within the country. Outside, an effort was made in the shape of the Indian National Army under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose to organize armed overthrow of British rule in India. All this violence went against Gandhiji's grain, and he condemned it in no uncertain terms when he came out of jail, although he fully appreciated the patriotism which prompted these acts. The people did not realize that even if sabotage did not involve killing it did not conform to his idea of non-violence. So they indulged in it, and Gandhiji had to show them the error of their ways and explain to them by comparison what genuine non-violence implied. He believed that India had the unique responsibility of showing to all the oppressed peoples of the world the way of pure non-violent resistance, through which alone they could hope to liberate themselves from their oppressors.

South Africa was, of course, very close to him, as he had spent twenty years of his life there. He had forged the weapon of non-violent resistance there, and had used it with success. But the battle against white racial pride and oppression had still to be won in that country. At this time discriminatory laws were passed by the South African Government, segregating Indians in certain specified areas. Gandhiji gave full support to the non-violent resistance movement started by South African Indians, and urged them to carry it on on a high moral plane in accordance with his conception of non-violence.

The British realized since August 1942, as they never did before, the utter unpopularity of their rule over us. They knew that they were sitting on top of a live volcano in India. The end of the war left them in a weak and exhausted condition, incapable of maintaining a far-flung empire. So when the war was over, and with it went Churchill and his Government, they took the opportunity to divest themselves of the Indian Empire.

No sooner did the British intention to leave India come to be known, than communal power-politics raised its ugly head in India. Communalism had been fostered and encouraged by the British to keep the people divided. It now bore fruits in the demand for partition. The demand was backed up by a programme of 'direct action' launched in August 1946 by the Muslim League, and resulted in communal violence such as had never been known in this country before — wholesale massacres, looting, arson, abduction and forcible conversion. Gandhiji was sick at heart. He toured Bengal and Bihar to quench the flame of communal frenzy. The division of the country and the grant of independence on August 15, 1947 did not mend matters. It only made them worse, as it led to mass migrations of population in certain parts of the country, and killing and plunder of refugees on a large scale on their way. Gandhiji was in agony. He could not bear the mad fatricide he saw all around him. He tried to end it. He succeeded in Bengal and Bihar, and just when he appeared to have succeeded also in Delhi, he was shot down on his way to the prayer meeting on January 30, 1948 by a Hindu who believed that to befriend the Muslim, as Gandhiji taught, was to endanger Hinduism and its future in India.

Such was the rapid succession of events which took place at this time.

Gandhiji realized during this period that the non-violence which India had practised in her struggle for independence was that of the weak. It was the non-violence of those who were incapable of violence against the armed might of Britain. The Congress adopted non-violence as a policy. This was a frank confession that it took to non-violence, not out of any intrinsic faith in it as a principle of human conduct, but because unarmed as we were, we could not resort to violence with any hope of success, much as we might otherwise have done. This, according to Gandhiji, was no non-violence at all. True non-violence, on the other hand, he believed, came from the heart, and therefore was abiding and permanent. It was a weapon of the strong. It required great courage, as it meant readiness to give up one's life in the cause of the right. It was rooted in true Religion, or the faith that Truth, Goodness and Love were at the heart of the universe. It accordingly demanded of its votary absolute honesty, purity of heart and self-discipline. Nay, more, it meant completely changing society, ethicizing it or instilling it with the highest morality. Consequently, though described negatively as non-violence, it involved the most positive form of action, the ceaseless activity of a crusader against every form of oppression and injustice.

Gandhiji's contribution lies in his thus extending the principle of non-violence from application merely to the narrow sphere of the individual to the much larger sphere of society. The individual, after all, never lives to himself; he is always a member of society. So if he is to be non-violent genuinely, he must transform his society. A non-violent individual cannot tolerate inequality, exploitation or tyranny in his environment. Hence Gandhiji's untiring insistence on truth and non-violence not only in individual life, but also in politics, economics and social relationships. His aim was not merely to reform the individual; he wished to help in establishing a righteous society, the Kingdom of God, where love and goodwill will prevail.

Gandhiji's teachings in this respect are not only for India but for all the world. Everywhere today there is suspicion and distrust, and preparation for armed conflict. To such a world,

Gandhiji points the way, the way of unadulterated non-violence based on true religion and morality. India needs his message, undoubtedly, especially to bring about communal unity, and to set the country on the way of achieving peace and prosperity for all. Is it too much to hope that we and the rest of the world may still see wisdom in Gandhiji's views and seek to put them into practice ? Unless we do so, there seems little hope of our being able to save ourselves from self-destruction.

The two years covered by this volume were crowded with activity for Gandhiji, so much so that he hardly had time for writing. Consequently, the views expressed by him in his talks to prayer-meeting audience and on other occasions were summarized by others and published in the *Harijan*. These summaries also are necessarily included in this volume.

A list of non-English words with their meaning is given for the use of readers not familiar with such words.

Bombay, May, 25, 1948 BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

Non-English Words with their Meanings

abala—devoid of strength; weak; a woman
Achhutistan—area inhabited by "untouchables"
ahimsa—non-violence
akhada—physical culture institute
asura—demon
avatar—incarnation of God
bhajan—hymn
bhangi—scavenger
chakra—wheel
charkha—spinning wheel
coolie—wage-earner; a term of contempt used for Indians by South African Europeans
dargah—tomb
darshan—sight; visit
Dar-ul-Harb—battlefield
dharma—religion; duty
gadi—throne
goonda—hooligan
hartal—strike
himsa—violence
Jai Hind !—Victory be to India !
jatiya sarkar—literally, national government; parallel government set up by the people in the villages during the 1942 Rebellion
jehad—religious war
kafir—infidel
khadi—hand-spun, hand-woven cloth
kirpan—sword worn by the Sikhs as a part of their religion
kisan—peasant
kutcheri—court
mandir—Hindu temple
manzil—house
masjid—mosque
mohalla—a small section of a village or town
pak—holy

panchayat—a village council of five members
pariah—outcaste; untouchable
pinjrapole—shelter for aged or crippled cows
purdah—literally, veil; seclusion
raj—rule; government
Ramadhun—chanting the name of God
Ramanama—the name of God
Ramarajya—the Kingdom of God
Rashtrapati—President of the Indian National Congress
ryot—agricultural tenant
sabhi bhumi Gopalaki—all land is God's
sadhana—adoration, worship
sanatani—a follower of orthodox Hinduism
sannyasi—one who has renounced the world
satya—truth
satyagraha—literally, clinging to truth; civil disobedience; non-violent resistance
satyagrahi—non-violent resister
shantidal—peace brigade
shastra—scientific treatise
swadeshi—use of goods locally produced
swaraj—self-government
tapashcharya—austerities
tebhaga—one-third
thana—police circle of jurisdiction; police station
urs—fair
vahana of Mahadev—the animal on which Mahadev or Shiva rides
yagna—sacrifice; bread labour
Yavana—literally, Ionian or Greek; barbarian
zamindar—land-holder
zamindari—land belonging to a land-holder

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1

SABOTAGE AND SECRECY

"How is the cutting of telegraphic wires contrary to the principle of *ahimsa* ?" a friend asked Gandhiji some time back.

The question is typical of many that have been put to Gandhiji since his release. Another friend who saw him some time after he left the Agakhan Palace posed to him the problem thus: "There are two schools of thought amongst our youth today. One school holds and openly says that as a programme of action *ahimsa* is played out. It has done its work which was to awaken the masses and has set the stage for the final struggle for independence. In this struggle force of arms cannot be excluded. The other school while professing belief in *ahimsa* says that there is room for modification and further elaboration in its technique. They aver that the next phase of our struggle would be characterized by organized sabotage on an extensive scale." Gandhiji questioned the statement that sabotage could be part of the non-violent programme or that it was derivable from the principle of *ahimsa* as he understood it. The friend however persisted that sabotage had come to stay whether one liked it or not. "Irresponsible prophesying leads to nowhere," cut short Gandhiji. "The real question is where *we* stand, what *our* attitude towards it is going to be."

The friend put before Gandhiji some of his doubts. Was destruction of Government property violence? "You say that nobody has a right to destroy any property not his own. If so, is not Government property mine? I hold it is mine and I may destroy it."

"There is a double fallacy involved in your argument," replied Gandhiji. In the first place, conceding that Government property is national property — which today it is not — I may not destroy it because I am dissatisfied with the Government. But even a national Government will be unable to carry on for a day if everybody claimed the right to destroy bridges, communications, roads, etc., because he disapproved of some of its activities. Moreover, the evil resides not in bridges, roads, etc., which are inanimate objects but in men. It is the latter who need to be tackled. The destruction of bridges, etc., by means

of explosives does not touch this evil but only provokes a worse evil in the place of the one it seeks to end. "I agree," rejoined the friend, "that the evil is within ourselves, not in the bridge which can be used for a good purpose as well as an evil one. I also agree that its blowing up provokes counter violence of a worse type. But it may be necessary from a strategic point of view for the success of the movement and in order to prevent demoralization."

"It is an old argument," replied Gandhiji. "One used to hear it in the old days in defence of terrorism. Sabotage is a form of violence. People have realized the futility of physical violence but some people apparently think that it may be successfully practised in its modified form as sabotage. It is my conviction that the whole mass of people would not have risen to the height of courage and fearlessness that they have but for the working of full non-violence. How it works we do not yet fully know. But the fact remains that under non-violence we have progressed from strength to strength even through our apparent failures and setbacks. On the other hand terrorism resulted in demoralization. Haste leads to waste."

"We have found," rejoined the friend, "that a person who has had a schooling in violent activity comes nearer to true non-violence than one who has had no such experience."

"That can be true only in the sense that having tried violence again and again he has realized its futility. That is all. Would you maintain also that a person who has had a taste of vice is nearer to virtue than the one who had none? For, that is what your argument amounts to."

The discussion then turned upon secrecy. The friend in question argued that whilst individual secrecy created a fear complex and was therefore an evil, organized secrecy might be useful. "It is no secrecy if the person concerned is boldly prepared to face the consequences of his action. He resorts to secrecy in order to achieve his object. He can refuse to take any part in subsequent interrogations during his trial. He need not make a false statement."

But Gandhiji was adamant. "No secret organization, however big, could do any good. Secrecy aims at building a wall of protection round you. *Ahimsa* disdains all such protection. It functions in the open and in the face of odds, the heaviest

conceivable. We have to organize for action a vast people that have been crushed under the heel of unspeakable tyranny for centuries. They cannot be organized by any other than open truthful means. I have grown up from youth to 76 years in abhorrence of secrecy. There must be no watering down of the ideal. Unless we cling to the formula in its fulness, we shall not make any headway.

"I know we have not always lived up to our ideal. There have been grave lapses. Had our instruments been less imperfect, we would have been nearer our goal. But in spite of our temporizing with our ideal, non-violence has worked like a silent leaven among the dumb millions. That does not mean that we can afford to go on like this for ever. We cannot remain static. We must move forward or we shall slide back."

"Are you of opinion then," asked the friend, "that the August revolution caused a setback in the struggle for independence; that all the heroism and courage which our people showed in the course of it was useless?"

"No," replied Gandhiji. "I do not say that. In the historical process, the country will be found to have advanced towards freedom through every form of struggle, even through the August upheaval. All that I have said is that the progress would have been much greater if we had shown the non-violent bravery of my conception. In this sense the sabotage activity has retarded the country's freedom. I have the highest admiration for the courage, patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice of people, say, like Jaiprakash Narain. But Jaiprakash cannot be my ideal. If I had to give a medal for heroism, it would go not to him but to his wife who, though simple and unlearned in politics, typifies in her person the power of Satyagraha in its purest form before which even Jaiprakash has to bow. What I have said about the August upheaval is not by way of judgment upon the past — I have consistently refused to condemn it — but as a guidance for the future."

"Our people," said the friend finally, "have faith in non-violence but they do not know how to make it dynamic. What is the reason for this failure?"

"By hammering away at it through painful years," replied Gandhiji, "people have begun to see that there is a potency in non-violence, but they have not seen it in all its fulness and

beauty. If they had responded to all the steps that had to be taken for the effective organization of non-violence and carried out in their fulness the various items of the eighteen-fold constructive programme, our movement would have taken us to our goal. But today our minds are confused because our faith in constructive work is so weak. I know, one must push forth undaunted by difficulties."

On the train to Madura, 2-2-'46
Harijan, 10-2-1946

2

ARE WE GOING DOWN?

"Personal likes and dislikes, ambitions and jealousies should have no place in our organization. What therefore distresses me greatly is that dislike, hatred and vindictiveness in private life and even public speeches are becoming common among Congressmen and consequently indiscipline and hooliganism are increasing." This extract is taken from a long letter from a friend. She even quotes instances and elaborates her thesis. But I have reproduced sufficient for my purpose. I whole-heartedly endorse every word of what she says. Though I do not read newspapers diligently, I feel that there is truth in her experience. Now that it seems that we are coming into our own, the evils complained of ought to go and calmness, rigid discipline, co-operation and goodwill must take the place of passion, indiscipline and jealousies, public and private. Or else Swaraj machinery will crack and go to pieces, and our future state may very well become worse than the present, bad and insufferable as it is. As I said in Mahishadal, the glow of Swaraj in action must be felt by the illiterate millions of India. They must feel the vital difference between the present autocratic and ordinance regime and the orderly, democratic, non-violent regime under Swaraj. I hug the hope that when real responsibility comes to the people and the dead weight of a foreign army of occupation is removed, we shall be natural, dignified and restrained. We are living just now in a state that is highly artificial and unnatural. The sooner we get out of it

the better for us, the ruling power and the world. I can therefore only suggest to my friend and those who think like her, that they should rigidly carry out in practice what they think even though they be a handful.

On the train to Madras, 4-2-'46
Harijan, 10-2-1946

3

NON-VIOLENCE AND MOLESTATION OF WOMEN

On the night of 29th December 1945, Gandhiji met about 200 men and women of Mahishadal and the nearabout villages. They included local workers and victims of police and military atrocities during the 1942 upheaval. Gandhiji invited questions. The first question was whether they were expected to remain non-violent even in the face of their women being dishonoured. They believed in suffering for Swaraj. They believed that any departure from non-violence would delay the coming of Swaraj. Then, what could they do in cases of molestation of their womenfolk ?

Gandhiji replied that he had been asked the same question in 1920 and 1921 and he could only repeat the reply which he gave then. The question betrayed ignorance of non-violence and also of Swaraj of his conception. He did not want Swaraj at the cost of women's honour. If what passed as non-violence did not enable them to protect the honour of women or if it did not enable the women to protect their own honour, it was not non-violence. "Believe me, it is something quite different," and he described what he had written in *Hind Swaraj* in 1909. The reader should read the argument on pages 44 to 51 of the Navajivan Press edition. Gandhiji observed that experience had added force to the argument. "After all who protected Sita from Ravan ? The Poet tells us that her purity was such that Ravan dared not compass his end without her consent."

He warned them in the end that if anybody came to him with the plea that they could not protect the honour of their womenfolk because they had taken the vow of non-violence, he would give them no quarter. Non-violence should never be

used as a shield for cowardice. It was a weapon of the brave. He would rather they died fighting violently than became helpless witnesses to such atrocities. A truly non-violent man would never live to tell the tale of such atrocities. He would have laid down his life on the spot in non-violent resistance.

In this connection I am reminded of Gandhiji's Frontier tour where the Khudai Khidmatgars had asked him the same question. "What if the miscreant does not kill you but ties you up instead and gags you so that you are forced to be a silent witness of his misdeed," they had asked after hearing his reply which was practically the same as he gave to the people at Mahishadal. "I will struggle," he had replied, "so that I will either break the bonds or break myself in the effort. In no case will I remain a helpless witness. When that intensity of feeling is there, God will come to your aid and somehow or other spare you the agony of being a living witness to such a deed."

Mahishadal, 29-12-'45
Harijan, 10-2-1946

4

NON-VIOLENT TECHNIQUE AND PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

Perhaps no part of India has passed through such fire of suffering as Midnapore during the August upheaval in 1942, when man's brutality completed the work of nature's wrath. Their suffering had chastened them but did not subdue their spirit. The chastening effect was visible in the perfect discipline and pin-drop silence that marked Gandhiji's prayer gatherings which were sometimes attended by over a lakh of people.

The question of non-violence and *Jatiya Sarkar* naturally constituted the core of the discussions which the Congress workers of Midnapore had with Gandhiji during his visit to Mahishadal. *Jatiya Sarkar* was set up in the *thanas* of Sutahata, Nandigram, Mahishadal and Tamluk in Midnapore Dist. on 17-12-1942 and 16-1-1943 and was formally dissolved on August 8, 1944, as a result of the publication of Gandhiji's statement on secrecy and underground work after his release from detention.

By September 1944, about 150 workers connected with it had come out into the open and surrendered themselves to the authorities. In a comprehensive report which the workers of Midnapore submitted to Gandhiji during his visit to Mahishadal, they described in graphic detail how during the August upheaval the people had captured *thanas*, burnt down *kutcheries*, paralyzed communications, and organized a parallel police service, intelligence branch and law courts where delinquents and those engaged in anti-social activities were brought to book and dealt with "according to law". They had scrupulously avoided taking of life, they claimed, and had therefore acted non-violently.

Later on they discussed the whole question of parallel government and sabotage with Gandhiji. "I cannot say," remarked Gandhiji "that all that has been done has been well done or ought to have been done. On the contrary, much of it ought not to have been done. That the people did not remain inert is a matter of satisfaction, but the fact that after all these years they should not have known what the Congress stood for is a matter for sorrow. What they did was thoughtless. By its very nature it could not be sustained.

"You have graphically put in your reports how you blew up a railway track, put a road out of use, burnt a *kutchery*, seized a *thana*, set up a parallel government and so on. This is not the technique of non-violent action. People committed the mistake of thinking that all that did not involve killing was non-violence. Sometimes killing is the cleanest part of violence. If you kill the mischief-maker outright, there is an end to it as far as he is concerned, but harassment is worse. It did not put out mischief. On the contrary, it brought the mischief on our own heads. The authorities became vindictive. Perhaps you will say that they would have been vindictive anyhow, but that is not what we should desire or aim at. It does not pay us to let them go into a panic.

"In August 1942, the authorities became panicky. We gave them that excuse. But they are a people who do not know what defeat is; their cowardice is not fundamental. So, they let such things as *thanas*, *kutcheries*, panchayat courts etc., remain in your hands for a short while as toys, but as soon as they had completed their dispositions they turned the full blast of their machinery of retaliation against us. It is not in this

way that India will attain her independence. We cannot afford to repeat it.

"Today you have to reckon not with Britain alone but the Big Three. You cannot successfully fight them with their own weapons. After all you cannot go beyond the atom bomb. Unless we can have a new way of fighting imperialism of all brands in the place of the outworn one of a violent rising, there is no hope for the oppressed races of the earth.

"Let nobody be misled by the Russian parallel," he continued. "Our tradition is wholly different from Russia's. The historical setting too is different. In Russia the whole population was under arms; Indian masses won't take to arms even if they could be given the necessary training. But it is useless to think that our rulers will let us give them that training when they have at a stroke disarmed a first-rate military State like Japan. Today Japan lies prostrate at the conqueror's feet. But non-violence knows no defeat. It must however be true non-violence, not a make-believe. I would not shed a single tear if I alone were left to represent such non-violence."

"After all that we have done and suffered," observed the friends, "we have begun to doubt whether our energies have flown in the right channel, whether the mass awakening was not misdirected. But, is not non-violent rebellion, a programme of seizure of power?" they asked.

"Therein lies the fallacy," replied Gandhiji. "A non-violent revolution is not a programme of 'seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of relationships ending in a peaceful transfer of power. If the people had fully carried out the five steps outlined by me in my 8th of August speech in the A. I. C. C. in Bombay, and had there been a perfect atmosphere of non-violence, the Government's power of repression would have been sterilized and it would have been compelled to yield to the national demand.

"If under the impact of foreign invasion or some such cause the ruling power abdicates and a vacuum is created, the people's organization will naturally take over its functions; but such *Jatiya Sarkar* would have no other sanction except that of non-violence and service of the people to enforce its fiats. It

will never use coercion. Even those who might hold contrary views will receive a full measure of security under it."

As an instance of the infinitely greater efficacy of the non-violent technique as compared to the technique of coercion, he mentioned the case of Bardoli. In Midnapore whilst they succeeded in capturing a few symbols of power in the initial stages, they could not retain the fruits of their success. But in Bardoli the Satyagrahis were able fully to retain the gains of their struggle. "Moreover, you have seen," resumed Gandhiji, "that all your bravery could not prevent the violation of women. Now that is intolerable. No one should be able to cast an evil eye upon them. This requires inculcation of a higher form of bravery, i.e., that of non-violence which can hurl defiance at death and against which the power of the aggressor cannot prevail. This is what I am trying to do. It may take time. It takes a long time to infuse this kind of higher courage among the millions. Whether this kind of non-violence will ever come into play or not I do not know. But you, who have had training in non-violence for all these years, ought to realize that in your hands non-violence should show all the brilliance that is inherent in it."

They next wanted to know as to how they could start on the right lines. Gandhiji in reply prescribed to them the spinning wheel as "the symbol and central sun of the 18-fold constructive programme." It was the best way of achieving social solidarity and non-violent organization. The technique of non-violent action consisted in isolating and sterilizing the instruments of evil. *Jatiya Sarkar* based on non-violence would not put Government servants under duress, but would effectively isolate them so that they would either have to align themselves with the people or be reduced to the necessity of carrying out the foreign Governments' writ through undiluted barbarism of which they would soon sicken and tire. Even their relations and dear ones would desert them. "This presupposes that no section among the people is labouring under a sense of injustice and wrong at the hands of the others. Untouchability, exploitation and communal rancour can have no place under a *Jatiya Sarkar*, or it will be like a house divided against itself which must fall."

Sevagram, 9-2-'46
Harijan, 17-2-1946

5

AFRICA AND INDIA

There was a group of Negro soldiers from West Africa. West African Negroes are perhaps the most awakened of the Africans. The experiment of modern university education has been tried among them and has produced some brilliant though queer results.

They quoted Gandhiji's observation that to remain in slavery is beneath the dignity of man; a slave who is conscious of his state and yet does not strive to break his chains is lower than the beast. "How can a continent like Africa fight down the fetters of slavery when it is so hopelessly divided?" they asked.

"I know your difficulty," replied Gandhiji. "If you think of the vast size of Africa, the distance and natural obstacles separating its various parts, the scattered condition of its people and the terrible divisions among them, the task might well appear to be hopeless. But there is a charm which can overcome all these handicaps. The moment the slave resolves that he will no longer be a slave, his fetters fall. He frees himself and shows the way to others. Freedom and slavery are mental states. Therefore, the first thing is to say to yourself: 'I shall no longer accept the role of a slave. I shall not obey orders as such but shall disobey them when they are in conflict with my conscience.' The so-called master may lash you and try to force you to serve him. You will say: 'No, I will not serve you for your money or under a threat.' This may mean suffering. Your readiness to suffer will light the torch of freedom which can never be put out."

"Africa and India both drink of the cup of slavery. What necessary steps can be taken to unite the two nations so as to present a common front?"

"You are right," replied Gandhiji. "India is not yet free and yet Indians have begun to realize that their freedom is coming, not because the White man says so but because they have developed the power within. Inasmuch as India's struggle

is non-violent, it is a struggle for the emancipation of all the oppressed races against superior might. I do not propose mechanical joint action between them. 'Each one has to find his own salvation' is true of this as well as of the other world. It is enough that there is a real moral bond between Asiatics and Africans. It will grow as time passes."

They wanted to know what India could give them and how they could achieve "co-operative industrialization" in order to be saved from the terrible exploitation under which they were suffering.

"The commerce between India and Africa," replied Gandhiji, "will be of ideas and services, not of manufactured goods against raw materials after the fashion of Western exploiters. Then, India can offer you the spinning wheel. If I had discovered it when I was in South Africa, I would have introduced it among the Africans who were my neighbours in Phoenix. You can grow cotton, you have ample leisure and plenty of manual skill. You should study and adopt the lesson of the village crafts we are trying to revive. Therein lies the key to your salvation."

Sevagram, 8-2-'46
Harijan, 24-2-1946

6

WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION

A Delegation on behalf of the South African Indian community has been in this country for some time past to enlist the co-operation and active support of their compatriots in their impending struggle for the right to exist as a self-respecting community. It includes some veteran Satyagrahi soldiers who took part in the Satyagraha fight under Gandhiji and which closed with the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement.

The Delegation saw Gandhiji more than once. They sought his advice as to the starting of a successful Satyagraha. "If you produce one civil resister of merit, he will put things through," said Gandhiji. "Do not start the struggle therefore unless you have the stuff. Manage to exist you will anyhow. But that should not satisfy you. You have to live as a self-respecting community with an equal status. Indians have to make good that position by showing the real stuff."

The conversation turned on the relations between the Indian community and the natives. Gandhiji mentioned how he had refused to send a message for a meeting of the West African Federation that was held some time back in London, because they conceived of a struggle after the way of Europe. "Probably theirs is not the way of non-violence. One day the Black races will rise like the avenging Attila against their White oppressors, unless some one presents to them the weapon of Satyagraha," he added.

"You have said we should associate with Zulus and Bantus. Does it not mean joining them in a common anti-White front?" one member of the Delegation asked.

"Yes, I have said," answered Gandhiji, "that we should associate with Zulus, Bantus, etc. It means that you take them under your wing when you have developed the power of non-violence. It will be good if you fire them with the spirit of non-violence. You will be their saviour. But if you allow yourselves to be overwhelmed and swept off your feet, it will be their and your ruin.

"Their slogan today is no longer merely 'Asia for the Asiatics' or 'Africa for the Africans' but the unity of all the exploited races of the earth. On India rests the burden of pointing the way to all the exploited races. She won't be able to bear that burden today if non-violence does not permeate us more than today. I have been trying to fit ourselves for that mission by giving a wider bend to our struggle. India will become a torch-bearer to the oppressed and exploited races, only if she can vindicate the principle of non-violence in her own case, not jettison it as soon as independence of foreign control is achieved."

"Race consciousness," remarked another member of the Delegation, "is rising all over South Africa. We Indians take advantage of the Bantus. We send our children to native colleges. But we are ashamed to call ourselves natives. They feel we are arrogant and aloof. We do not do enough to make an adequate return for what we have got from them. They are getting resentful and the White man encourages and promotes that feeling to widen the gulf."

"It will be an evil day for you if he succeeds," replied Gandhiji. "The trouble is that you are all worshippers of the golden calf."

"Having never seen it, how can we worship it?" Mr. Christopher put in.

"Worshipping is different from seeing," retorted Gandhiji. "Don't we worship God without seeing Him?"

Delhi, 8-5-'46
Harijan, 19-5-1946

7

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Indian Deputation from South Africa have made a great stir in India. They propose to approach the UNO with a view to enlist the latter's sympathy. But the legislation is going through in South Africa. The Indian High Commissioner will be withdrawn as he should be. What little aid he can render is nothing compared to the indignity of representing a country whose inhabitants are to be treated as an inferior race. This new caste is worse than the ancient but dying institution of India which has some redeeming features, even while it is dying. But the new civilized edition has none. It shamelessly proclaims that White civilization requires the erection of legal barriers in order to protect itself against Asiatics and Africans. The Indians in South Africa are bearing a heavy burden which they are well able to discharge. Satyagraha, the mightiest weapon in the world, was born and bred there. If they make effective use of it, it will be well with the sacred cause they are handling. It is not one of making it easy for a handful, to be permitted to live and trade there, if they wear the badge of inferiority called years ago by an Englishman of South Africa 'dog's collar'. The cause is the cause of the honour of India, and through her of all the exploited coloured races of the earth, whether they be brown, yellow or black. It is worth all the suffering of which they are capable.

New Delhi, 27-5-'46

Harijan, 2-6-1946

8

WHITE MAN'S BURDEN !

According to Reuters picked Indians, men and women, headed by Dr. Naicker, commenced Satyagraha (in South Africa popularly known as passive resistance) on June 14th in respect of the Segregation Law of the Union Parliament of South Africa. The same agency further reports that neither the Government nor the Municipality had taken any action against the passive resisters but that some 'Whites' of Durban had taken the execution of the law into their own hands by raiding the camp at night, cutting down tents swiftly and carrying them away. "A band of 100 young White men broke through the cordon of 50 Indian passive resisters, pulled down the tents and dragged them away torn. Some camp stretchers were smashed and blankets and pillows removed. Two women resisters were involved in the melee. They are stated to have been kicked but not injured."

The papers report that after three days of hooliganism the Borough Police had posted themselves near the scene of passive resistance and warned the hooligans against molesting the resisters and terrorizing them into submission. This is heartening news. Let us hope that it can be taken at its full value and that the protection means fullest protection against lawlessness, sporadic or organized. Organized popular lawlessness is known as lynching, so shamelessly frequent in America.

Before the Segregation Law was passed, White men, known to be respectable, had carried anti-Asiatic agitation to the point of frenzy. Not satisfied with their triumph in having legislation compelling segregation, passed probably beyond expectation, the more advanced section among the agitators have become the executioners of their own laws. They do not know that they are thereby defaming the White man's name ! ! !

My appeal to the White men and women who have regard for laws for which they have voted is that they should create public opinion against hooliganism and lynch law.

Passive resistance is aimed at removal in a most approved manner of bad laws, customs or other evils and is designed to be a complete and effective substitute for forcible methods including hooliganism and lynch law. It is an appeal to the heart of man. Often reason fails. It is dwarfed by self. The theory is that an adequate appeal to the heart never fails. Seeming failure is not of the law of Satyagraha but of incompetence of the Satyagrahi by whatever cause induced. It may not be possible to give a complete historical instance. The name of Jesus at once comes to the lips. It is an instance of brilliant failure. And he has been acclaimed in the West as the Prince of passive resisters. I showed years ago in South Africa that the adjective 'passive' was a misnomer, at least as applied to Jesus. He was the most active resister known perhaps to history. His was non-violence par excellence. But I must no longer stray from my main subject. It is the resistance of the Jesus type that the White hooligans are seeking to thwart. Let us hope that our countrymen's heroic resistance will not only shame the hooligans into silence but prove the precursor of the repeal of the law that disfigures the statute book of South Africa. In concrete form, what pure suffering, wholly one-sided, does is to stir public opinion against a wrong. Legislators are, after all, representatives of the public. In obedience to it they have enacted a wrong. They have to reverse the process when the same public, awakened to the wrong, demands its removal.

The real 'White man's burden' is not insolently to dominate coloured or Black people under the guise of protection, it is to desist from the hypocrisy which is eating into them. It is time White men learnt to treat every human being as their equal. There is no mystery about whiteness of the skin. It has repeatedly been proved that given equal opportunity a man, be he of any colour or country, is fully equal to any other.

Therefore, White men throughout the world and especially of India should act upon their fellow-men in South Africa and call upon them not to molest Indian resisters who are bravely struggling to preserve the self-respect of Indians in the Union and the honour of their motherland. "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." Or, do they take in vain the name of Him who said this? Have they banished from

their hearts the great coloured Asiatic who gave to the world the above message? Do they forget that the greatest of the teachers of mankind were all Asiatics and did not possess a white face? These, if they descended on earth and went to South Africa, will all have to live in the segregated areas and be classed as Asiatics and coloured people unfit by law to be equals of Whites.

Is a civilization worth the name which requires for its existence the very doubtful prop of racial legislation and lynch law? The silver lining to the cloud that hangs over the devoted heads of our countrymen lies in the plucky action of Rev. Scott, a White clergyman, and his equally White fellow workers, who have undertaken to share the sufferings of the Indian resisters.

New Delhi, 26-6-'46
Harijan, 30-6-1946

9

SOUTH AFRICA

The heroic struggle going on in South Africa has become a theme of Gandhiji's after-prayer talks. "We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit meekly any longer to a policy of segregation that is causing disaster to our country and our people," runs the Passive Resistance resolution passed at a meeting of the Transvaal Indian Congress held at Johannesburg on April 21, 1946. "They must remember," continues the resolution, "that non-violence is the basis of this movement and that this struggle is directed against the policy of segregation and not against the White population of this country."

The struggle has the full sympathy of the European Democrats and the Negro section of South Africa. Said the President General of the South African National Congress at the Transvaal Indian Congress mass meeting:

> "I declare from this platform that we Africans do not only sympathize, but will support and assist in all possible manner the Indians in their struggle against this inhuman legislation."
>
> "Yesterday," he continued, "it was the turn of Africans, today it is the turn of the Indians, tomorrow it will be the

turn of the coloured and there is no knowing where this policy of racialism will end."

Referring to the events of the struggle, as reported in the daily press, Gandhiji in his prayer address on 21-6-'46 described how some White people there had taken the law into their own hands and were harassing the passive resisters. "The Union Government seem to be just watching. It is wrong. It is bad enough to pass an unjust law, but it is worse to let White people take it into their own hands. They ought to realize that Indians are in no way inferior to them. The latter cannot and will not submit to segregation."

Some White men, said Gandhiji, were daily raiding their tents, and terrorizing them. Some women were also among the resisters. But the women had bravely told the men that they would stand by them and share their vicissitudes. "The passive registers are not criminals but respectable citizens. As self-respecting people they will prefer imprisonment to segregation in ghettoes. They will resist injustice and oppression with their last breath. It is open to the South African Government to visit them with the penalty of the law for breach or to abrogate the Segregation Act which is contrary to the dictates of humanity. But it will be a dark blot on the history of the White civilization if lynch law is allowed to have its course in South Africa." He hoped that the South African Government and the civilized conscience of mankind would not allow that.

"What is taking place in South Africa today is worse than martial law," remarked Gandhiji in the course of another prayer address. He did not say these things, he added, to incite them to anger against the Whites of South Africa. If they did that, they would be unworthy to sit in the prayers. He wanted them to go home and pray that God may give strength to their brethren and sisters in South Africa, who were fighting for the honour of India, to face all hardships bravely; secondly that He should show light to the White men so that they might cease to behave like less than men and that the eyes of the Government there may be opened so that they may treat Indians as fellow human beings. The Whites of South Africa too were their brethren, being children of the same God.

When they had the control of India's affairs in their own hands, Gandhiji concluded, such things would become impossible. A Free India wedded to truth and non-violence would teach the lesson of peace to the inhabitants of South Africa. But it would be for them and the Congress to decide whether a Free India would follow the way of peace or the sword. It was bad enough that the small nations of the earth should denude humanity of its precious heritage, it would be awful if a sub-continent of some four hundred millions were to take to gunpowder and live dangerously.

New Delhi, 24-6-'46
Harijan, 30-6-1946

10

THE WAY OF AHIMSA

The daily reports about the calm, dignified behaviour of the Indian passive resisters in South Africa in the face of the hooliganism of some White people who were getting more and more frenzied, evoked pointed reference in his discourses during the remaining few days that Gandhiji was at Delhi. The Indians in South Africa are a mere handful, perhaps a little over two lakhs, in the midst of the overwhelming majority of White men and Negroes. "Imagine," observed Gandhiji, "what it must mean for men like Doctors Naicker and Dadoo to be required to live in special locations. I want you all to continue your prayers to God to enable our brethren to remain steadfast till the end and to vouchsafe wisdom to the Whites. Let me repeat that prayer from the heart can achieve what nothing else can in the world."

He paid tribute to the courage and suffering of the passive resisters without retaliation in the midst of the hooliganism which was daily increasing. He was born in India but was made in South Africa of which he knew practically every province. He had passed there twenty years of his life at its meridian. He knew the White men of South Africa. He loved them as well as his countrymen. He felt ashamed, he said, of the hooliganism of some of them. He had the fear that this hooli-

ganism had the sympathy of the mass of the White men of the Union. Hooliganism would not flourish without such silent sympathy. He fondly hoped that as the White men realized the deep strength and sincerity of Satyagrahis, they would begin to respect them and transfer their sympathy to the suffering passive resisters. He asked the gathering to offer their heartfelt prayers for God's mercy on the hooligans. He did not want them to send money to their countrymen. Money could not give them victory. They had money enough. But a time might come when it would be their duty in India to offer non-violent resistance of the purest type for the sake of their brethren. He could not tell how. India was fast becoming the granary of the honour and dignity of the human race. It would be in the fitness of things if it fell to their lot to help the struggle of the gallant resisters of South Africa. But for that the way must be clear before them. He felt that he would know when it was clear. Meantime he invoked the sympathy of the Viceroy and the White men and women of India to do their portion of duty.

Poona, 30-6-'46
Harijan, 14-7-1946

11

A PORTENT

South African Satyagraha is a sign and a portent. As Pandit Jawaharlalji remarked the other day in the A.I.C.C. meeting, it may be that the future of India is even now being decided by the struggle of the Indians overseas, particularly in South Africa. Lynch law has already claimed its first victim. Commenting on the doings of the White hooligans who were said to have beaten to death an Indian, whom they mistook for a Satyagrahi, Gandhiji remarked, "It is a sad event. Nevertheless, I feel happy. A Satyagrahi must always be ready to die with a smile on his face without retaliation and without rancour in his heart. Some people have come to have a wrong notion that Satyagraha means only jail going, perhaps facing lathi blows and nothing more. Such Satyagraha cannot bring Independence. To win Independence you have to learn the art of dying without killing."

Indians in South Africa are a mere handful in the midst of the overwhelming majority of the Whites and the Negroes. The Whites in the intoxication of power had not only enacted a barbarous measure but had taken the law in their own hands. The excuse trotted out for that infamous measure was that it was necessary for saving the White civilization from being swamped by the rising tide of colour. "I venture to submit," remarked Gandhiji commenting on this, "that a civilization which needs such barbarous legislation for its protection is a contradiction in terms. The Indians are fighting for their honour. The land in South Africa does not belong to the Whites. Land belongs to one who labours on it. I would not shed a single tear if all the Satyagrahis in South Africa are wiped out. Thereby they will not only bring deliverance to themselves but point the way to the Negroes and vindicate the honour of India. I am proud of them and so should be you." His object in speaking to them, he continued, was not to move them to tears or to incite them to anger and vituperation against the Whites. Rather they should pray to God to guide the Whites

aright and grant strength and courage to their brethren to remain steadfast to the end.

Some Highlights

The way in which the courage and renunciation of the Satyagrahis is rising to the occasion would make the heart of an Indian dilate with pride. Dr. Goonam, a woman passive resister, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour. The trying magistrate reduced her sentence by four months. She objected to it saying that she wanted no favour on the score of her sex. Her offence, if it could be so called, was the same as that of men Satyagrahis. But the magistrate would not listen to her objection. Young Sorabjee who was recently here as the head of the South African Delegation has also gone to prison. A worthy son of a worthy father, the late Parsi Rustomji, he distinguished himself by his unusual courage even as a young lad of sixteen in the course of the Satyagraha movement which was conducted by Gandhiji in South Africa. A mounted White man threatened to overrun the passive resisters. Sorabjee held the reins of the horse and told the horseman that he could not frighten the Satyagrahis into submission by such tactics. His pluck averted an ugly situation.

It is gratifying too to find that there is at least one White man in South Africa, Rev. Scott of Johannesburg, whose Christian conscience has revolted against the inequity of the colour bar and the ill-treatment to which the passive resisters are being subjected there. As a protest against it he has joined the ranks of the passive resisters and has gone to the only fit place, in the words of Thoreau, for a just man under an unjust government, namely prison. "It is no small thing," remarked Gandhiji, in paying him a glowing tribute, "for a White man to identify himself with the coloured people in South Africa. If the Satyagrahis remain firm and non-violent till the end, all will be well with them."

"The South African struggle may appear to be insignificant today," remarked Gandhiji in the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay, "but it is charged with momentous consequences. Satyagraha is today being tried in the land of its birth. The success of a handful of Indians mostly descendants of indentured

labourers had excited the jealousy of the Whites of South Africa. And they are now subjecting them to unspeakable indignities. They are sought to be segregated into ghettoes and further humiliated by being offered an inferior franchise. That all this should happen under the imprimatur of Field Marshal Smuts fills me with shame and humiliation. Our sins have a strange way of coming home to roost. We turned a portion of ourselves into *Pariahs* and today the Whites of South Africa are doing the same to our compatriots there. Let us purge ourselves of this curse and bless the heroic struggle of our brethren in South Africa. They do not need our monetary help. But they need all our sympathy and moral support."

Poona, 9-7-'46
Harijan, 14-7-1946

12

THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE

Gandhiji's first utterance at Poona on his return from the A. I. C. C. was about the world significance of the South African Satyagraha. South African Satyagraha is fast becoming the question of the questions. It has become the focus of attention of the Negroes who, disarmed, helpless and groaning under the tyranny of the White usurpation, have begun to see in it a symbol and promise of their own deliverance. They have decided to join the ranks of Indian passive resisters. The South African struggle has thus opened a window on Independent India's future mission in respect of the oppressed people of the world. To realize its full significance it is necessary to know a little of its historical background. Indian emigrants first went to South Africa as '*girmitias*'— indentured labourers — in or about 1840. The Whitemen could not get the Negroes to work for them. So they took labour from India under the indenture system. It was a form of semi-slavery, the difference being that whilst a slave was bound for life, the indentured labourer was bound for five years according to the terms of the indenture. In the wake of these labourers went the Indian traders, Haji Saheb Abubaker

Ahmed Zaveri of Porbandar being the first. Then there were small traders from Kathiawad, Memons from Surat and Patidars from Bardoli, who went there and made a living, some as merchants and as hawkers and pedlars. This was in and after 1882. They helped to develop South Africa and made some money. Their children entered the professions, became doctors and lawyers. It was these people, remarked Gandhiji, who were fighting in South Africa today and their fight was not so much for themselves as for Indian honour. "I know what is taking place there because in a way I belong to South Africa, having passed 20 years of the best part of my life there. It was there that Satyagraha was born. The West is passing through a purgatory today. The vanquished lie prostrate at the feet of the victors. But those who have won the war have found that they are no more victors than those who have lost it. Yet it is not in world war No. II that Western civilization will have met its grave. It is being dug in South Africa. The White civilization in South Africa looks black in contrast with the coloured or the Asiatic civilization which is comparatively white. If our people remain steadfast and non-violent till the end, I have not a shadow of a doubt that their heroic struggle will drive the last nail in the coffin of Western civilization which is being found out in its true colours in South Africa.

Field Marshal Smuts's Apologia

"The Whites in South Africa are becoming like brutes. Eastern and Western cultures are pitted against each other. And what a contrast they present! The Whites have enacted savage laws to force the Indians to live in ghettoes. Field-Marshal Smuts is a great philosopher. He calls me his friend. He has nothing to say against Asiatic culture. But he has to take measures to safeguard the White civilization. He told me that he did not look down upon coloured people. The fact that Mrs. Subbarayon, when she went to England for studies stayed in Field-Marshal Smuts's house supports that statement. But, said the Field-Marshal, in spite of the absence of prejudice, he was bound to protect Western culture in South Africa and he hoped that an understanding man that I was, I would appreciate it."

Gandhiji failed to understand how a culture or civilization worth the name could require legal protection. The Indians

were resisting the ghetto law in a civil, i.e. non-violent and therefore civilized way. They welcomed the penalty for the breach of a law which could not be morally defended. But the White hooligans too were breaking their own laws. Theirs was criminal disobedience. It was a matter of pride for India that the children of indentured labourers and traders — many of them descendants of Harijans — were proving themselves such brave Satyagrahis. As against this, the Whites were resorting to lynch law. "After all," remarked Gandhiji, "civil resistance had its birth in Asia. Jesus was an Asiatic. If he was reborn and went to South Africa today and lived there, he would have to live in a ghetto."

He hoped that as in 1914 Field-Marshal Smuts would at long last realize that he could not persecute the Indians in South Africa for ever and come to an honourable settlement with them when he had tried them through and through. A committee of Whitemen had been formed in South Africa to express sympathy with and identify themselves with the cause of the Indian passive resisters there. There was something of that kind in his time also. But this time it seemed to be on a bigger scale. "If this becomes extensive and the hooliganism stopped and anti-Asiatic laws are repealed, there is hope of a blending of Eastern and Western cultures. Otherwise South Africa may prove to be the grave of Western civilization."

Panchgani, 15-7-'46
Harijan, 21-7-1946

13

TIRED OF SATYAGRAHA ?

News comes from Durban that a group of Indians has sprung up in South Africa, who have lost faith in Satyagraha. They cherish the dream that they can overthrow the rule of the White man there, only by joining forces with the Negroes, the coloured people, other Asiatics and European sympathizers and adopting violent means. The rumour, if there is any truth in it, is disturbing and a definite fly in the ointment. All, whether they believe in non-violence or not, should realize that Indians in South Africa gained world-wide esteem, simply because, in spite of being a handful, they showed infinite capacity for suffering and did not, through losing their patience, resort to sabotage and violence. They learnt the wholesome lesson that true wellbeing springs from suffering and that victory lies in unity. From my own experience, my firm advice to Indians in South Africa is that they should, on no account, be lured away into throwing aside the matchless weapon of Satyagraha.

This does not, however, imply that they are not to accept the help of the coloured people, Negroes and any other sympathizers, or that they will not help them in their need should an occasion arise. The only condition is that Satyagraha should be their one and only weapon. If they go astray from the path of non-violence, they will conform to the description of the poor woman, who, as an Indian proverb goes, went in search of a son and succeeded in losing her husband !

New Delhi, 11-9-'46
Harijan, 22-9-1946 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

14

TO SOUTH AFRICA

[On the eve of their departure for South Africa, Gandhiji sent the following message to Drs. Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker, to be conveyed to Field-Marshal Smuts, the European community, the African and coloured peoples and to the Satyagrahis. —Ed.]

Field-Marshal Smuts is a trustee for Western civilization. I still cling to the hope that he will not sustain it on the suppression of Asiatics and Africans. South Africa should present a blend of the three.

To the people of South Africa, to whom I am no stranger, I would say that they should not make the position of their representatives impossible by their unwarranted prejudice against colour. The future is surely not with the so-called White races if they keep themselves in purdah. The attitude of unreason will mean a third war which sane people should avoid. Political co-operation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on truth and non-violence.

I have no doubt that those South African Indians who seek to create a division will do harm to themselves and to the great cause of liberty for which the movement of Satyagraha has stood and must stand.

To the Satyagrahis I would advise strict adherence to the fundamentals of Satyagraha which literally means force of truth and this is for ever invincible. It is a good sign that they have a progressive European group solidly behind them. The Satyagrahis of South Africa should know that they have India at their back in their struggle for preserving the self-respect of the Indians in South Africa.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

15

INDIANS OVERSEAS

Q. In case the UNO fails to do justice by the Indians in South Africa, what line of action would you advise the South African Indians to take ?

A. I cannot even think of failure in Satyagraha. It never fails. This is my firm belief.

Q. What effect do you think the failure of the UNO to deal justly with the South African-Indian dispute will have on the future of that organization ?

A. If the UNO fails to deal justly with the South African-Indian dispute, the UNO will lose its prestige. I have no doubt that the UNO can prosper only if it is just.

Q. And what will be the effect of the failure on the world ?

A. About the effect on the world no one knows. At least I do not.

Q. Racial inequality must be removed if there is to be peace in the world. What is your advice to those who agree with this but do nothing to fight the evil of racial inequality ?

A. Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all the underdogs will have to earn their own salvation.

Q. What remedy do you propose for the elimination of racial prejudice and antagonisms from the affairs of mankind ?

A. The resolution is largely in India's hands. If everything is all right in India internally, she is likely to play an effective part in straightening up affairs.

Q. What message have you for our countrymen overseas living in a distracted world ?

A. The spirit of India at its best should be exhibited by each one in his own person. Our shortcomings must be buried in India.

(Gandhiji's answers from the daily Press)

Harijan, 26-10-1947

16

HOW TO CANALIZE HATRED

Hatred is in the air and impatient lovers of the country will gladly take advantage of it, if they can, through violence, to further the cause of independence. I suggest that it is wrong at any time and everywhere. But it is more wrong and unbecoming in a country where fighters for freedom have declared to the world that their policy is truth and non-violence. Hatred, they argue, cannot be turned into love. Those who believe in violence will naturally use it by saying, 'kill your enemy, injure him and his property wherever you can, whether openly or secretly as necessity requires'. The result will be deeper hatred and counter hatred, and vengeance let loose on both sides. The recent war, whose embers have yet hardly died, loudly proclaims the bankruptcy of this use of hatred. And it remains to be seen whether the so-called victors have really won or whether they have not depressed themselves in seeking and trying to depress their enemies. It is a bad game at its best. Some philosophers of action in this country improve upon the model and say, 'We shall never kill our enemy but we shall destroy his property'. Perhaps I do them an injustice when I call it 'his property', for the remarkable thing is that the so-called enemy has brought no property of his own and what little he has brought he makes us pay for. Therefore, what we destroy is really our own. The bulk of it, whether in men or things, he produces here. So what he really has is the custody of it. For the destruction too we have to pay through the nose and it is the innocent who are made to pay. That is the implication of punitive tax and all it carries with it. Non-violence in the sense of mere non-killing does not appear to me, therefore, to be any improvement on the technique of violence. It means slow torture and when slowness becomes ineffective we shall immediately revert to killing and to the atom bomb, which is the last word in violence today. Therefore, I suggested in 1920 the use of non-violence and its inevitable twin companion truth, for canalizing hatred

into the proper channel. The hater hates not for the sake of hatred but because he wants to drive away from his country the hated being or beings. He will, therefore, as readily achieve his end by non-violent as by violent means. For the past 25 years, willingly or unwillingly, the Congress has spoken to the masses in favour of non-violence as against violence for regaining our lost liberty. We have also discovered through our progress that in the application of non-violence we have been able to reach the mass mind far more quickly and far more extensively than ever before. And yet, if truth is told as it must be, our non-violent action has been half-hearted. Many have preached non-violence through the lips while harbouring violence in the breast. But the unsophisticated mass mind has read the secret meaning hidden in our breast and the unconscious reaction has not been altogether as it might have been. Hypocrisy has acted as an ode to virtue, but it could never take its place. And so I plead for non-violence and yet more non-violence. I do so not without knowledge but with sixty years' experience behind me. This is the critical moment, for the dumb masses are today starving. There are many ways that will suggest themselves to the wise reader as to how to apply the canons of non-violence to the present needs of the country. The hypnotism of the I.N.A.* has cast its spell upon us. Netaji's name is one to conjure with. His patriotism is second to none (I use the present tense intentionally.). His bravery shines through all his actions. He aimed high but failed. Who has not failed? Ours is to aim high and to aim well. It is not given to everyone to command success. My praise and admiration can go no further. For I knew that his action was doomed to failure, and that I would have said so even if he had brought his I. N. A. victorious to India, because the masses would not have come into their own in this manner. The lesson that Netaji and his army bring to us is one of self-sacrifice, unity irrespective of class and community, and discipline. If our adoration will be wise and discriminating, we will rigidly copy this trinity of virtues, but we will as rigidly abjure violence. I would not have the I. N. A. man think or say that he and his can

* The Indian National Army (I. N. A.) was formed in Singapore in 1941-'2. It hoped under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to free India from British rule. When the British regained Singapore and Burma, the I. N. A. men were taken prisoners by the British and tried in India.—Ed.

ever deliver the masses of India from bondage by force of arms. But if he is true to Netaji and still more so to the country, he will spend himself in teaching the masses, men, women and children, to be brave, self-sacrificing and united. Then we will be able to stand erect before the world. But if he will merely act the armed soldier, he will only lord it over the masses and the fact that he will be a volunteer will not count for much. I, therefore, welcome the declaration made by Capt. Shah Nawaz that to be worthy of Netaji, on having come to Indian soil, he will act as a humble soldier of non-violence in Congress ranks.

Sevagram, 15-2-'46
Harijan, 24-2-1946

17

A PLEA FOR CLEAR THINKING

The political slavery, they all hoped and Gandhiji shared that hope, would soon end. But the removal of the foreign yoke won't necessarily bring freedom to the people in the real sense of the term. The Congress President had only the other day denounced the recent happenings in Calcutta as being unworthy of a people who aspired to be free. He hoped that they would never disgrace themselves again like that. They were greatly deceiving themselves if they thought that by indulging in hooliganism they would be able to make the British quit India. They would belie their creed and demean themselves in the eyes of the world if after pledging themselves to truth and non-violence as their only means for the attainment of Swaraj, they exhibited their impotent wrath by indulging in looting, stone throwing, arson and abuse. He repeated what he had previously said that if 40 crores of Indians resolved unanimously and whole-heartedly that they would have Swaraj through truth and non-violence alone, it would be theirs for the asking. But if they lacked that faith, it was open to them to repudiate non-violence openly and after due deliberation. People like him might question their wisdom but nobody would charge them with falsehood and cowardice. He was afraid, they could not escape that charge today. He reminded them of Capt. Shah

Nawaz's declaration that Netaji Bose had told the I. N. A. that on their return to India they would be expected to serve their country not by means of the sword but through non-violence. "Granted that India produced sufficient arms and ammunition and men who knew the art of war, what part or lot will those who cannot bear arms have in the attainment of Swaraj? I want Swaraj in the winning of which even women and children would contribute an equal share with physically the strongest. That can be under *ahimsa* only. I would, therefore, stand for *ahimsa* as the only means for obtaining India's freedom even if I were alone."

Harijan, 3-3-1946

18

9TH AUGUST

9th August like 6th April, 13th April and 26th January is a red letter day in the battle of India's freedom. They are days for universal *hartal* in terms of Satyagraha, i.e. truth and non-violence. But today, considered in terms of Satyagraha, *hartals* are generally taboo and more specially so, on the coming 9th of August.

The Working Committee, rightly or wrongly, has taken a step. It has been endorsed by the A. I. C. C. It is up to every Congressman to support the Congress going to the Constituent Assembly, by creating the atmosphere suitable for work in that Assembly. This I say even to those who distrust good faith in everything the British do. They may warn the Congress of the dangers they sense. This they were allowed, by the President to have the fullest latitude to do at the recent A. I. C. C. meeting. Anything in excess of that opposition is surely harmful for the country. I would consider as such a *hartal* on the 9th August.

The Congress cannot have the cake and eat it too. It must be left free, it must be helped, to develop freedom through the 'Constituent Assembly'. It will not be a waste of effort to honestly work the 'Assembly' for the purpose. The Congress must not kill the hen before it has laid.

Then mark the atmosphere in the country. There is senseless disorder as in Ahmedabad and elsewhere. There is a parody of Satyagraha in the show staged by Dr. Ambedkar. In Satyagraha the cause has to be just and clear as well as the means. The cause is certainly vague, even if the means are non-violent. I doubt the wisdom of the sympathetic paralysis of all business in Bombay and elsewhere, assuming the postal strike to be good on merits. Many would seem to have left off all thinking. They seem to take up any nostrum without caring to examine its merits. To call for *hartal* in this atmosphere is to invite disorder. No disorder is conducive to the growth of independence. Considered from every point of view, I hope that 9th August next will see no *hartal* in India, but a peaceful and dignified, orderly celebration of the day as advised by the President of the Congress.

Panchgani, 27-7-'46
Harijan, 4-8-1946

19

THE MESSAGE OF THE I. N. A.

The day after his visit to the I. N. A. prisoners Gandhiji said at the evening public prayer :

"Let me share with you the thoughts that have been crowding in my mind since yesterday. India has accorded to the released I. N. A. men a right royal welcome. They have been acclaimed as national heroes. Everybody seems to have been swept off his feet before the rising tide of popular sentiment. I must, however, frankly confess to you that I do not share this indiscriminate hero-worship. I admire the ability, sacrifice and patriotism of the I. N. A. and Netaji Bose. But I cannot subscribe to the method which they adopted and which is incompatible with the one followed by the Congress for the last twentyfive years for the attainment of independence. Yesterday I spoke to you of a *sthitaprajna* (स्थितप्रज्ञ) i.e. "the man of steady wisdom", i.e., a Satyagrahi. If we accept that ideal we would not regard anybody as our enemy; we must shed all

enmity and ill-will. That ideal is not meant for the select few — the saint or the seer only; it is meant for all. I have described myself as a scavenger having become one, not only in name but in fact, while I was in Phoenix. It was there that I took up the bucket and the broom, impelled by the inner urge to identify myself with the lowest of the low. As a humble fellow toiler, then, let me bear witness that any one, even a simple-minded villager who wants to and tries, can attain the state of mental equipoise described in the Gita verses which are recited at the prayer. We all lose our sanity at times, though we may not care to admit it or be even aware of it. A man with a steady mind will never lose patience, even with a child, or indulge in anger or abuse. Religion as taught in the Gita is a thing to be practised in this life. It is not a means for attaining merit in the next irrespective of what you may do here. That would be a negation of religion.

"For me the visit to the I. N. A. men in detention was a matter of pure duty. It gave me supreme satisfaction to be able to meet them, and they on their part received me with a warmth of affection which I shall always treasure. I have interpreted their welcome as a token of their recognition in me of a devoted servant of the country.

"Netaji was like a son to me. I came to know him as a lieutenant full of promise under the late Deshabandhu Das. His last message to the I. N. A. was that, whilst on foreign soil they had fought with arms, on their return to India they would have to serve the country as soldiers of non-violence under the guidance and leadership of the Congress. The message which the I. N. A. has for India is not adoption of the method of appealing to arms for settling disputes (it has been tried and found wanting), but of cultivating non-violence, unity, cohesion and organization.

"Though the I. N. A. failed in their immediate objective they have a lot to their credit of which they might well be proud. Greatest among these was to gather together under one banner men from all religions and races of India and to infuse into them the spirit of solidarity and oneness to the utter exclusion of all communal or parochial sentiment. It is an example which we should all emulate. If they did this under the glamour and

romance of fighting, it was not much. It must persist in peace. It is a higher and more difficult work. We have to die performing our duty and without killing. For that we shall need to cultivate the attributes of a *sthitaprajna* as set forth in the *Gita.*

"Far more potent than the strength of the sword is the strength of Satyagraha. I said so to the I. N. A. men and they were happy to tell me, as I was to hear, that they had realized this and would hereafter strive to serve India as true soldiers of non-violence under the Congress flag."

New Delhi, 8-4-'46
Harijan, 14-4-1946

20

A MESSAGE FOR THE I. N. A.

The other day I was talking to the I. N. A. men in the Red Fort. We were discussing as to what they should do on their release. They assured me that they would on their release serve India as true soldiers of non-violence under the Congress flag. I told them that today a true soldier of India is he who spins to clothe the naked and tills the soil to grow more food to meet the threatening food crisis. The Congress has declared that it would carry on the struggle for India's independence through the method of non-violence. But it has not yet decided whether it would adhere to that method for the protection of that freedom against possible foreign aggression. To me it is a self-evident truth that if freedom is to be shared equally by all — even physically the weakest, the lame and the halt — they must be able to contribute an equal share in its defence. How that can be possible when reliance is placed on armaments, my plebeian mind fails to understand. I therefore, swear and shall continue to swear by non-violence, i.e. by Satyagraha or soul force. In it physical incapacity is no handicap and even a frail woman or a child can pit herself or himself on equal terms against a giant, armed with the most powerful weapons.

The eighteen-fold constructive programme with the spinning wheel as its centre is the concrete expression of that spirit

in organized society. Let us realize that spirit by devoting ourselves prayerfully to the carrying out of the constructive programme during the National Week.

For the I. N. A. men there were two alternatives. They could serve free India as soldiers-in-arms or they could convert themselves into soldiers of non-violence if they were convinced that non-violence was the higher and the more efficacious way. They should make use of their training and discipline to introduce non-violent organization among the masses, learn spinning and become veteran constructive workers. If they did that, they would set a glorious example to the whole world.

"The I. N. A. men," observed Gandhiji, "have shown great strength, heroism and resourcefulness. But I must confess that their achievements have not dazzled my eyes. To die without killing requires more heroism. There is nothing very wonderful in killing and being killed in the process. But the man who offers his neck to the enemy for execution but refuses to bend to his will shows courage of a far higher type.

"Troublous times lie ahead of us. Our non-violence has brought us to the gate of independence. Shall we renounce it after we have entered that gate? I for one am firmly convinced that non-violence of the brave, such as I have envisaged, provides the surest and most efficacious means to face foreign aggression and internal disorder just as it has done for winning independence." The British were going to quit. What place would India have in the comity of nations? Would she be satisfied with being a fifth-rate power like China? China was independent only in name. India would have long to wait before she could become a first-class military power. "And for that she would have to go under the tutelage of some Western power. A truly non-violent India will have nothing to fear from any foreign power nor will she look to British navy and air force for her defence. I know that we have not as yet the non-violence of the brave."

New Delhi, 16-4-'46
Harijan, 21-4-1946

21

I. N. A. MEN'S DILEMMA

Between 50 to 60 senior officers of the I.N.A. met Gandhiji in the Sweepers' Colony the other day during his stay in Delhi. They first sang in a chorus the I. N. A. Hindustani adaptation of Gurudev's song "*Janaganamana adhinayaka jaya he Bharata bhagyavidhata*" just as they had sung during Gandhiji's visit to them behind the barbed wire fence in the Kabul Lines when their fate still hung in the balance. Gandhiji then addressed them a few words in Hindustani.

"Other friends have placed before me," he began, "the dilemma which, I am told, faces many of you too. The Congress creed is, of course, that of winning Swaraj through non-violence and peaceful means but there are many men outside, and even within the Congress, who have begun to doubt whether that policy of the Congress has not exhausted its purpose and now become effete for the task that lies ahead, specially in view of the changed and changing times.

"You who have served under Subhas Babu as veteran fighters have proved your mettle on the battlefield. Success and failure are, however, not in our hands, but in God's hands alone. Netaji told you when bidding good-bye to you that, on your return to India, you must put yourself under the Congress discipline and act according to its policy. Your object, as I have been told, was only to free India, never to help the Japanese. You failed in your direct objective, i.e. to defeat the British. But you have the satisfaction that the whole country has been roused and even the regular forces have been stirred into a new political consciousness and have begun to think in terms of independence. You have achieved a complete unity among the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Anglo-Indians and Sikhs in your ranks. That is no mean achievement. What, however, you realized under conditions of freedom outside India, you have now to sustain and keep alive under Indian conditions. That will be your real test.

"If you have imbibed the spirit of non-violence, you will remain free men at heart even here. For instance, no government on earth can make men, who have realized freedom in their hearts, salute against their will. If they threaten to kill them they will offer their necks to them, but refuse to submit. The odds are that a soldier's spirit will revolt against such cold-blooded murder. Thus, whether they live or die it will be as free men. They will never be slaves. If you all become free men at heart, the whole of India will be free. They might imprison you. You will welcome it or you can tell them that you will be a corpse before they can put you into prison. Both alternatives are open to a non-violent soldier and both call for bravery of the highest order. Our task is no less than to reinfuse life into the 400 millions of India. We have to dispel fear from their hearts. On the day they shed all fear, India's fetters shall fall and she will be free.

"Years ago I said at Nankanasahib: 'Sikhs have given proof of their martial valour. But the consummation of Guru Govind Singh's ideal will be reached only when they will substitute for their *kirpans* the sword of the spirit or non-violence.' So long as one wants to retain one's sword, one has not attained complete fearlessness. No power on earth can subjugate you when you are armed with the sword of *ahimsa*. It ennobles both the victor and the vanquished. Netaji has fired you with a new spirit. That spirit can now be kept alive only through non-violence."

Having thus explained to them the significance of *ahimsa* in terms of martial courage, Gandhiji proceeded to place before them the higher type of courage that is required of a Satyagrahi soldier to become an ideal, self-respecting citizen. "Above all, you must never beg or throw yourself on anybody's charity. Because you have risked your lives for India's sake and fought for her on the Imphal plain, you must not expect to be pampered in return. If you do that, you will lose all worth like the salt that has lost its savour. You should prefer to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow, but refuse to beg or accept charity. In short, you have to show the same degree of bravery and courage of the non-violent type as you have done in the use of arms hitherto.

"If you want land you will have it. You will clear it and turn it into model farms. You have to overcome the inertia of ages which weighs down our masses. That you will be able to do only by setting an example of industry and hard work. You must be able to wield the bucket and the broom with skill and diligence and not consider the cleaning of latrines as dirty or beneath your dignity. Graduation in this work is more heroic than winning the Victoria Cross."

Then followed questions and answers:

Q. How can one who has spent his whole life in fighting take to *ahimsa* with success? Are not the two incompatible?

A. I do not agree. Badshah Khan is a Pathan. But today he has become a soldier of non-violence. Tolstoy too served in the army. Yet he became the high priest of non-violence in Europe. We have not yet realized fully the power that is in non-violence. If the Government had not arrested me in 1942, I would have shown how to fight Japan by non-violence.

Q. Surely, it is no breach of *ahimsa* to use the sword in self-defence?

A. Even Wavell, Auchinleck or Hitler does not use the sword without necessity. But that does not make it *ahimsa*. It is *himsa*, whatever its justification.

Q. You cannot take the world along with you if you adopt *ahimsa*. You have to choose the one or the other.

A. There again I disagree. A reformer has to sail not with the current, very often he has to go against it, even though it may cost him his life. You must not be carried off your feet by unthinking, popular applause. The essential part of your message to the country is not how to wield the sword but to cease to be afraid of it.

Q. What would you have done if Subhas Babu had returned to you victorious?

A. I would have asked him to make you put away your weapons and stack them before me.

Mussoorie, 30-5-'46
Harijan, 9-6-1946

22

I. N. A. AGAIN

"Give us a chance. What could you have us do next?" said an I. N. A. Captain who came to see Gandhiji at Panchgani last week.

"You should give proof of the same courage and bravery here that you people displayed on the battlefield," replied Gandhiji. "There was perfect unity in the ranks of the I. N. A. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, all communities were like blood-brothers. There was no high or low, no Untouchable. Demonstrate that unity here. But I am afraid you will not be able to do so."

"Yes, we cannot, so long as the British power rules over us," replied the I. N. A. friend.

"Well, there is a lot that can be done in spite of the British. I have voluntarily become a *bhangi*. Who can prevent me from doing so? Shah Nawaz today is an Indian first and an Indian last. Nobody can prevent him from doing so. In fact, wherever he goes, he puts up with his Hindu friends. But even so, he realizes that he cannot achieve here what he could outside India. The I.N.A. men on returning to their homes take the complexion from their environment. They shed what they had learnt outside and it is difficult to prevent them from falling into the old ruts.

"Again, if you expect India to spend lakhs on you, that is not right. You should be like Garibaldi's soldiers who were promised by their leader only 'blood, toil and tears'. They tilled the land and supported themselves when not engaged on the battlefield. No one paid them a salary. You have been trained by the Britishers who spend lavishly. If you expect medals like Victoria Crosses and such prizes as the British can give you, you will be disappointed. The starving millions of India cannot afford that. You have to become one with them and serve them. Today the man in the street is terrified of the military. The military man acts like a bully and there can be

no appeal against his high-handedness. You have to prove that you are friends and servants of the people, so that they will not be awed by you."

"We befriend the people here as we did outside India," put in the I. N. A. Captain.

"That is good," replied Gandhiji. "But I tell you, your leaders are finding it difficult to control the I. N. A. men in India. There are petty jealousies and rivalries. 'If A can get something, why not I?'—that is the kind of feeling coming uppermost. It was different abroad. You had a very capable leader in Netaji. In spite of our sharp differences, I have always admired his burning patriotism, courage and resourcefulness."

"You have no idea of the deep love and admiration he had for you," interrupted the Captain. "What should be our contribution in the next struggle for Independence?" he asked next.

"The struggle for Independence is going on today. It has never stopped," replied Gandhiji. "But, if my will prevails, it will be a non-violent struggle. The lesson of the last 25 years of training in non-violence, has gone home to the masses. They have realized that in non-violence they have a weapon which enables a child, a woman or even a decrepit old man to resist the mightiest government successfully. If your spirit is strong, mere lack of physical strength ceases to be a handicap. *Per contra* I have seen the Zulus in South Africa with Herculean bodies tremble before a White child. White soldiers could go into the Zulu kraals and shoot men, women and children sleeping in their beds. There was no resistance in the Zulu and the physical strength could not make up for it."

Badlapur, 5-8-'46
Harijan, 11-8-1946

23
NOT LONELY

A friend wrote to me the other day how lonely he felt in the midst of company. This remark was prompted by my telling him that I distrusted the word of the official world. He did not, and had thought that I might share his trust. Behold his disappointment when he found me wanting. It may be that was not what he meant by his cryptic letter. Anyway that was my interpretation and I replied that as a man of God he must never feel lonely. For, God was ever with him. Why should he care even if the whole world deserted him? Let him trust in spite of me, as long as the trust came from his heart and not his head.

I feel differently. Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. I have sound reasons for distrusting the English official world. If my love is sincere, I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust. Of what avail is my love, if it be only so long as I trust my friend? Even thieves do that. They become enemies immediately the trust is gone.

See what is happening in Bombay—the Bombay where I have passed so much time, which has given the public causes so much money and which I had thought had fairly imbibed something of *ahimsa*. Will it prove the burial ground of *ahimsa*?

I am unable to think that the incendiarism, the looting and the insults heaped upon Englishmen are or were acts of hooligans. Who are hooligans? Will there be none when English rule is no more? The fashion of blaming the hooligan ought to be given up. We are the makers of the brand. They respond to the air about them.

Imagine the senselessness of looting grainshops. The looters did not help themselves. Even if they did, they were not starving. The grain was meant for the starving. If it was being misused, looting could not prevent that misuse. Usurpers will always replace the looted grain while there is any to usurp.

Between the two sets of looters the starving will be more starved than before.

They who incited the mutineers did not know what they were doing. The latter were bound to submit ultimately. Or, was it meant as a lesson in violence? That is not the way to understand history.

I ask myself, and perhaps others are asking, why I am not repeating what I did after Chauri Chaura. I have no call in that direction. When or if it comes, nothing in the world will prevent me, ill or well. Let me reaffirm the truth that I love the Englishman as well as the Indian. Both are humans. Yet I want the rule of and for the masses of India. Lokamanya has taught us that Home Rule or Swaraj is their birthright. That Swaraj is not to be obtained by what is going on now in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi.

Let every Congressman, whether four anna member or not, think for himself where Congress should stand. Let us not deceive ourselves and the world.

Poona, 24-2-'46
Harijan, 3-3-1946

24

A REQUEST

A friend suggests that I should write a treatise on the science of *ahimsa*.

To write such a treatise is beyond my powers. I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain. What I understand, according to my lights, to be my duty, and what comes my way, I do. All my action is actuated by the spirit of service. Let any one who can systematize *ahimsa* into a science, do so—if indeed it lends itself to such treatment. In the event of my inability the correspondent has suggested three names in order of preference for this task: Shri Vinoba, Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala, Shri Kaka Kalelkar. The first named could do so but I know he will not. Every hour of his is scheduled for his work and he would regard it as sacrilege to take a single moment therefrom for writing a *shastra*. I would agree with him. The world does not hunger for *shastras*. What it craves and will always crave is sincere action. He who can appease this hunger will not occupy his time in elaborating a *shastra*.

Shri Kishorlal has already written an independent treatise. If his health permits I know he would like to write further. It may not be correct to call his work a *shastra* but it may be said to be very near to one. In his present state of health, however, I do not think he can shoulder the burden and I would be the last person to lay it on him. Like Shri Vinoba he too does not allow a moment of his time to be wasted. Much of it is given to help solve the personal problems of a large circle of friends. The end of the day leaves him utterly exhausted.

Shri Kakasaheb like Shri Thakkar is an incorrigible nomad. Just now he has made the propagation and development of the national and provincial languages his special concern. Even if he wanted to divert a moment of his time to the writing of a *shastra* I would try to prevent him from doing so.

From the above it may be concluded that there is no need at present for the treatise in question. Any such during my

lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all, it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would fail to give a complete exposition of *ahimsa*. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of *ahimsa*. I can give no guarantee that I will do or believe tomorrow what I do or hold to be true today. God alone is omniscient. Man in the flesh is essentially imperfect. He may be described as being made in the image of God but he is far from being God. God is invisible, beyond the reach of the human eye. All that we can do, therefore, is to try to understand the words and actions of those whom we regard as men of God. Let them soak into our being and let us endeavour to translate them into action but only so far as they appeal to the heart. Could any scientific treatise do more for us ?

Poona, 25-2-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 3-3-1946

25

COERCIVE FAST

Telegrams and letters condemning my remarks about Rajaji have been received. Some of them say that all the praise bestowed on Rajaji is well deserved. They admit his integrity, self-sacrifice, great ability and administrative capacity. But they hold his so-called apostasy in 1942 to be unforgivable and add that his scheming to be Premier of Madras is insufferable. For me there is no offence or apostasy in resigning from the Congress and maintaining one's views. If he is scheming to get the Premiership, it is undoubtedly worthy of condemnation and would be a sad discovery for me.

But my purpose in reverting to the subject is not for the sake of defending him. My opinion carries no authority save moral which can be rejected at will. What I want is to reprehend the threat of fasting or the fast itself if I do not withdraw the epithet 'clique' in respect of those who are opposing him. I have given my meaning of the word. And I adhere to its use according to that meaning. Nobody should be coerced into

changing his belief. There would be an end to all decency and reason if such fasting became effective. As the author of fasting as a weapon in Satyagraha, I must state that I cannot give up an opinion honestly held even if the whole world fasts against me. I might as well give up my belief in God because a body of atheists fasted against such belief. The rule of conduct stated by me is of universal applicability. Incidentally, I may mention that the fasts reported of prisoners in some U.P. jails and now of persons aggrieved by the decision of the Parliamentary Board elsewhere fall under the same category though for different and sound reasons.

Poona, 22-2-'46
Harijan, 3-3-1946

26

STATEMENT ON GENERAL AVARI'S FAST

Letters and wires continue to come to me seeking my aid in saving General Avari's life which seems now to be sinking. I know Gen. Avari. He is a lovable worker. But I know too that he is often improperly obstinate. The present occasion is a case in point. If a man however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause and fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends (among whom I count myself), fellow workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair. Let me say once more where Gen. Awari's end is improper and unfair. He may be wholly right in his statement that a great wrong has been perpetrated by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress. But who can right the wrong? Not Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as Gen. Avari tells me he can. He is but an individual, Sardar though he is. He has pronounced the decision of the Board. A judge cannot review his own judgment. The Sardar is out of the picture. The Central Board cannot, must not, review its own judgment. It has no authority. No institution can act capriciously in a well managed democracy. Gen.

Avari and his friends have the right of appeal or review by the Working Committee, then the A.I.C.C., finally the Congress. This procedure may appear to him too long. It is not, unless he is fighting for an individual or individuals and not for a principle as he assures me he is doing. Time always runs in favour of the defence of a principle. If the general session of the Congress which is the highest tribunal for vindicating justice decides against Gen. Avari, he has to submit to its verdict. The Congress is the *panchayat*. Like the king it can do no wrong. This is merely a necessary and legitimate conception for guidance in the observance of an infallible duty. In truth, however, decisions of human organizations in all climes have been sometimes found to be wrong. So it may be in the case under discussion. Then, but not till then, will Gen. Avari have in theory the right, if he choose to exercise it, to stir public conscience into action by a fast to the finish. In practice, it will be ludicrous. For the principle behind such action can only euphemistically be so called. In democracy even pure men may unconsciously give wrong decisions. The remedy is more and purer education, greater awakening of the public and in such quickened atmosphere the rise of a number of public workers whose sole duty will be to speak, write and act so as to serve as bright examples for the public.

Now I hope the friends of Gen. Avari will understand me when I say that those who wrongly support him and his fast and thus encourage him will hasten Gen. Avari's death, not those who will not swerve from well-recognized canons of justice even for the sake of saving the life of an erring friend. Let justice triumph though the heavens weep.

Poona, 7-3-'46
Harijan, 17-3-1946

27

FASTING IN THE AIR

> "Fasting has become a veritable epidemic. The blame lies at your door." So writes a correspondent and adds: "One can understand the efficacy of a fast for purposes of inward purification as also for the outward. But fasts are undertaken nowadays for an increment in one's own pay or in that of one's group, for being selected as a candidate for the Assembly or for various other causes. You encourage one man for fasting for the removal of untouchability and yet you are willing to let another die who is doing the same for a different cause. Is this not injustice? Should you not lay down rules as to when to fast and when not to, what should be its duration, should fruit juices be taken or only water? You talk of the inner voice where you are concerned. Would it not really be best if you were to stop undertaking fasts yourself and stop others too?"

There is force in the above argument. It is, however, impossible to lay down rules. Experience alone can suggest rules. In particular cases it is open to a person to frame his own law or he can refer to me, if he believes me to be an authority. I have had the temerity to claim that fasting is an infallible weapon in the armoury of Satyagraha. I have used it myself, being the author of Satyagraha. Anyone whose fast is related to Satyagraha should seek my permission and obtain it in writing before embarking on it. If this advice is followed, there is no need for framing rules, at any rate, in my lifetime.

One general principle, however, I would like to enunciate. A Satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. There is no room for imitation in fasts. He who has no inner strength should not dream of it, and never with attachment to success. But if a Satyagrahi once undertakes a fast from conviction, he must stick to his resolve whether there is a chance of his action bearing fruit or not. This does not mean that fasting cannot or can bear fruit. He who fasts in the expectation of fruit generally fails. And even if he does not seemingly fail, he loses all the inner joy which a true fast holds.

Whether one should take fruit juices or not depends on one's physical powers of endurance. But no more fruit juice than is absolutely necessary for the body should be taken. He probably has the greatest inner strength who takes only water.

It is wrong to fast for selfish ends, e.g. for increase in one's own salary. Under certain circumstances it is permissible to fast for an increase in wages on behalf of one's group.

Ridiculous fasts spread like plague and are harmful. But when fasting becomes a duty it cannot be given up. Therefore I do fast when I consider it to be necessary and cannot abstain from it on any score. What I do myself I cannot prevent others from doing under similar circumstances. It is common knowledge that the best of good things are often abused. We see this happening every day.

New Delhi, 13-4-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 21-4-1946

28

PRESS STATEMENTS

I

I have followed the events now happening in India with painful interest. This mutiny in the Navy and what is following is not, in any sense of the term, non-violent action. Inasmuch as a single person is compelled to shout *Jai Hind* or any popular slogan, a nail is driven into the coffin of Swaraj in terms of the dumb millions of India. Destruction of churches and the like is not the way to Swaraj as defined by the Congress. Burning of tramcars and other property, insulting and injuring Europeans, is not non-violence of the Congress type, much less mine, if and in so far as it may be different from the Congress. Let the known and unknown leaders of this thoughtless orgy of violence know what they are doing and then follow their bent. Let it not be said that India of the Congress spoke to the world of winning Swaraj through non-violent action and belied her word in action and that too at the critical period in her life. I have deliberately used the adjective "thoughtless". For, there

is such a thing as thoughtful violent action. What I see happening now is not thoughtful. If the Indian member of the Navy know and appreciate non-violence, the way of non-violent resistance can be dignified, manly and wholly effective, if it is corporate. For the individual it always is. Why should they continue to serve if service is humiliating for them or India? Action like this I have called non-violent non-co-operation. As it is, they are setting a bad and unbecoming example for India.

A combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy and will lead to and probably is a preparation for mutual violence — bad for India and the world.

The rulers have declared their intention to 'quit' in favour of Indian rule. Let the action be not delayed by a moment because of the exhibition of distressful unrest which has been lying hidden in the breast. Their might is unquestioned. Its use beyond the bare requirement will be unworthy and even wicked if it is made to suppress the people or a portion of them. The people have been far too long under the foreign heel.

Poona, 23-2-'46
Harijan, 3-3-1946

II

I congratulate Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali on her courageous refutation of my statement on the happenings in Bombay. Except for the fact that she represents not only herself but also a fairly large body of underground workers, I would not have noticed her refutation, if only because she is a daughter of mine — not less so because not born to me or because she is a rebel. I had the pleasure of meeting her on several occasions while she was underground. I admired her bravery, resourcefulness and burning love of the country. But my admiration stopped there. I did not like her being underground. I do not appreciate any underground activity. I know that millions cannot go underground. Millions need not. A select few may fancy that they will bring Swaraj to the millions by secretly directing their activity. Will this not be spoon-feeding? Only open challenge and open activity is for all to follow. Real Swaraj *must* be felt by all — man, woman and child. To labour for that consum-

mation is true revolution. India has become a pattern for all exploited races of the earth, because India's has been an open, unarmed effort which demands sacrifice from all without inflicting injury on the usurper. The millions in India would not have been awakened but for the open, unarmed struggle. Every deviation from the straight path has meant a temporary arrest of the evolutionary revolution.

I do not read the 1942 events as does the brave lady. It was good that the people rose spontaneously. It was bad that some or many resorted to violence. It makes no difference that Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala, Kakasaheb and other workers, in their impatient zeal for the moment, misinterpreted non-violence. That they did so, only shows how delicate an instrument non-violence is. My analogy is not meant to cast any reflection on any person. Everyone acted as he or she thought best. Supineness in the face of overwhelming organized violence would have meant cowardice. I would be weak and wrong if I failed to give my estimate of the doings of 1942.

Aruna would "rather unite Hindus and Muslims at the barricade than on the constitution front." Even in terms of violence, this is a misleading proposition. If the union at the barricade is honest, there must be union also at the constitutional front. Fighters do not always live at the barricade. They are too wise to commit suicide. The barricade life has always to be followed by the constitutional. That front is not taboo for ever.

Emphatically it betrays want of foresight to disbelieve British declarations and precipitate a quarrel in anticipation. Is the official deputation coming to deceive a great nation? It is neither manly nor womanly to think so. What would be lost by waiting? Let the official deputation prove for the last time that British declarations are unreliable. The nation will gain by trusting. The deceiver loses when there is correct response from the deceived.

Let us face facts. The coming mission is claimed to be a friendly mission, entertaining the hope that they will discover a constitutional method of delivery. The problem is knotty, probably the knottiest that has ever confronted statesmen. It is possible that the mission will put forth an insoluble conundrum.

So much the worse for them. If they are intent upon finding an honest way out of the difficulties of their own creation, I have no doubt there is a way. But the nation too has to play the game. If it does, the barricade must be left aside, at least for the time being. I appeal to Aruna and her friends to make wise use of the power their bravery and sacrifice have given them.

It is a matter of great relief that the ratings have listened to Sardar Patel's advice to surrender. They have not surrendered their honour. So far as I can see, in resorting to mutiny they were badly advised. If it was for grievance, fancied or real, they should have waited for the guidance and intervention of political leaders of their choice. If they mutinied for the freedom of India they were doubly wrong. They could not do so without a call from a prepared revolutionary party. They were thoughtless and ignorant if they believed that by their might, they would deliver India from foreign domination.

Aruna is right when she says that the fighters this time showed grit as never before. But grit becomes foolhardiness when it is untimely and suicidal as this was.

She is entitled to say that the people "*are not* interested in the *ethics* of violence or non-violence", but the people *are* very much interested in knowing *the way* which will bring freedom to the masses—violence or non-violence. The people have, however imperfectly, hitherto gone the way of non-violence. Aruna and her comrades have to ask themselves every time whether the non-violent way has or has not raised India from her slumber of ages and created in them a yearning, very vague perhaps, for Swaraj. There is, in my opinion, only one answer.

There are other passages in Shrimati Aruna's statement which, as it appears to me, betray confusion of thought. But their treatment can wait.

Needless to say that I have dealt with the message believing it to represent her opinion. If it does not, I apologize to her in advance. My argument however, is not affected even if it is found that the reporter has not correctly interpreted her. For my argument is, after all, impersonal and directed only to the

portions which are calculated to mislead the public, irrespective of their authorship.

Poona, 26-2-'46
Harijan, 3-3-1946

29

CONFLICT OF IDEAS

"She was unable to understand Gandhiji calling upon R.I.N.* ratings to resign if their condition was humiliating. If they did that they would have to give up their only means of livelihood. Moreover, they were fighting for principles. If they resigned now there would be hundreds in these days of unemployment to take their places who would be subject to the same discrimination and treatment and the R. I. N. ratings would not have achieved anything. It simply does not lie in the mouth of Congressmen who were themselves going to the legislatures to ask the ratings to give up their jobs. It does not help the cause of the country at all."

Every one of the statements quoted above from Aruna Asaf Ali's press interview is contrary to the views generally held by or attributed to Congressmen. Whether she really holds or does not hold the views put into her mouth is irrelevant here. For the moment it is enough to examine them on their merits and to show that they are wholly inconsistent with Congress resolutions.

The first principle of non-violent action as propounded in the Congress resolution of 1920 at its special session in Calcutta under the late Lala Lajpatrai is that of non-co-operation with everything humiliating. It must be remembered that the R. I. N. was founded not for the benefit of the ruled. The men went with their eyes open. Discrimination stares one in the face. It cannot be avoided if one enters the service which is frankly organized to keep India under subjection. One may, one ought to, try to mend the conditions. That is possible only up to a point. That cannot be achieved through mutiny. Mutiny may conceivably succeed but the success can only avail the

*Royal Indian Navy.

mutineers and their kin, not the whole of India. And the lesson would be a bad inheritance. Discipline will be at least as necessary under Swaraj as it is now. India under successful mutineers would be cut up into warring factions exhausted by internecine strife.

India of the Congress has made little headway in the appreciation of the fight for Swaraj, if it is true that hundreds would take their places if the present ratings resigned in pursuance of their campaign against humiliation. Can we have Swaraj for the masses if we are so degraded that hundreds of us are ready to swallow humiliation even to the extent of taking the places of humiliated fellowmen? The very thought is unworthy of Congressmen and that too at the moment when Swaraj is believed to be within sight.

Those who hold that enlistment in the R. I. N. is their only means of livelihood must have a very poor opinion of them. A soldier's is a hard life. He *is* disciplined to work in co-operation and trained to work with the pickaxe and the spade. Such a one will disdain to think that apart from soldiering he has no means of livelihood. We have a poor opinion of soldiers, if we think that they cannot earn their bread by the sweat of the brow. A labourer is any day worthy of his hire. What is, however, true is that a soldier out of his calling will lack the glamour and the amenities provided for him. We have wasted precious twentyfive years if we have not yet stripped the profession of killing and destroying of the thick coat of varnish that has covered it for so long.

Aruna Asaf Ali has been reported to have said that the ratings would have gained nothing by resigning. Well, they would have gained honour and dignity if they had manfully given up their job, and taught the citizens of Bombay the way to save honour and dignity, and they would have spared Bombay the senseless destruction of life, property and very precious foodstuffs. Surely this would have been an achievement not quite beneath notice.

The last statement in the reported interview is surely a confusion of thought. Congressmen going to the legislatures for conserving the honour and liberty of the country is not the same as ratings serving for their livelihood with the possibility of be-

ing used against their own countrymen and their liberty. Congressmen who go to the legislatures are representatives elected by their voters and they go even if it is only to prevent those from going who will misrepresent the voters. Going to the legislatures may be altogether bad, but there can be no such comparison as has been just adverted to.

Poona, 3-3-'46
Harijan, 10-3-1946

30

FRUITS OF VIOLENCE

"Look at Italy," said Gandhiji the other day to a friend who would have independence at all costs. "Garibaldi was a great man. He brought deliverance to Italy. And Mussolini did make her look great. But where is she today? Look at Japan, look at Germany. The very violence which brought them to the pinnacle of power has razed them to the ground. And has not the atom bomb proved the futility of all violence? And yet we are crazy enough to think that we can win Swaraj by breaking a few skulls and destroying property which, after all is said and done, is our own." Needless to say that all these happenings have filled him with unspeakable anguish. But he is an irrepressible optimist. "I am sure, out of this orgy of violence the people will learn the lesson of non-violence," he remarked. The sense of oppression and misery that he feels at what is happening is so great that only his unquenchable faith in the God of Truth and Non-violence could sustain him.

Poona, 3-3-'46
Harijan, 10-3-1946

31

FOR SHAME !

The following is the text of Gandhiji's speech at Rungta House prayer gathering in Bombay on the evening of 11-3-'46.

"The news of the recent events in Bombay has filled me with shame and humiliation as it must have you too. Let me hope that none of those who are here took part in these disgraceful happenings. But that alone would not entitle you to my congratulations. We have reached a stage when nobody can afford to sit on the fence or take refuge in the 'ambiguous middle'. One has to speak out and stand up for one's convictions. Inaction at a time of conflagration is inexcusable. Is it too difficult an ideal to follow ? Let me tell you, however, that this is the only course that will take us safely through the present difficult times.

No Moral Alibis

"It has become the fashion these days to ascribe all such ugly manifestations to the activities of hooligans. It hardly becomes us to take refuge in that moral alibi. Who are the hooligans after all ? They are our own countrymen and so long as any countryman of ours indulges in such acts we cannot disown responsibility for them consistently with our claim that we are one people. It matters little whether those who were responsible for the happenings are denounced as *goondas* or praised as patriots—praise and blame must equally belong to us all. The only manly and becoming course for those who are aspiring to be free is to accept either whilst doing our duty.

"The Way of the Lord"

"In eating, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the brute. What distinguishes him from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane. Mankind is at the cross roads. It has to make its choice between the law of the jungle and the law of humanity. We in India deliberately adopted the latter twentyfive years back but I am afraid that whilst we

profess to follow the higher way our practice has not always conformed to our profession. We have always proclaimed from the housetops that non-violence is the way of the brave but there are some amongst us who have brought *ahimsa* into disrepute by using it as a weapon of the weak. In my opinion, to remain a passive spectator of the kind of crimes that Bombay has witnessed of late is cowardice. Let me say in all humility that *ahimsa* belongs to the brave. Pritam has sung : "The way of the Lord is for the Brave, not for the Coward." By the way of the Lord is here meant the way of non-violence and truth. I have said before that I do not envisage God other than truth and non-violence. If you have accepted the doctrine of *ahimsa* without a full realization of its implications you are at liberty to repudiate it . I believe in confessing one's mistakes and correcting them. Such confession strengthens one and purifies the soul. *Ahimsa* calls for the strength and courage to suffer without retaliation, to receive blows without returning any. But that does not exhaust its meaning. Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly. We have to cultivate that courage, if we are to win India's independence through truth and non-violence as proclaimed by the Congress. It is an ideal worth living for and dying for. Every one of you who has accepted that ideal should feel that inasmuch as a single English woman or child is assaulted it is a challenge to your creed of non-violence and you should protect the threatened victim even at the cost of your life. Then alone you will have the right to sing "The way of the Lord is for the Brave, not for the Coward." To attack defenceless English women and children because one has a grievance against the present Government hardly becomes a human being.

Harijan, 7-4-1946

32

THE BETTER WAY

Several army men have been to Gandhiji's camp during the week to seek advice. One of them saw Gandhiji. He was deeply agitated. The men were getting desperate, he said. Would Gandhiji ask them to lie low and swallow all the humiliations and injustice ?

"No," replied Gandhiji. "But, as you know, I stand for unadulterated non-violent action and open means. I abhor secrecy."

The visitor felt puzzled. What place could non-violence have in the fighting ranks as a means of redress, he wondered.

"I laid down a programme of non-violent action in my 7th of August '42 speech in the A. I. C. C. for evoking and organizing the highest non-violence and self-sacrifice that the country was capable of," remarked Gandhiji. "I told in that speech what the Press should do, what the students should do, what the princes should do, what the Government servants should do, and lastly what the Indian soldiers should do. If all of them had done their part as suggested by me, it would have had a staggering effect. That programme can still be acted upon. The soldiers should declare that they will do soldiering not for their bellies but to make India free and to keep her free. I do not want them to be disloyal to the Government in whose pay they are, for if they are disloyal to the present Government today, by the same token they may be disloyal to the national government tomorrow. But it is no disloyalty for a soldier to go and tell his superiors that he will be their man only so long as they stand for his country's freedom and that he would never bear arms to crush the liberty of his own people. If as a result of their declaration they were disbanded, cashiered or even court-martialled, they should not mind. Thereby they would light a spark which not all the armaments at the disposal of any power would be able to put out and before long the entire Indian Army would be filled with the spirit of patriotism without having to shed blood. If, on the contrary, they resorted to indiscipline and

violence or rowdyism they would alienate all sympathy and provide the authorities an excuse to teach them a lesson."

"My brain was muddled, when I came here," replied the visitor. "I now see things more clearly. You have saved us from a big mistake. We shall take no precipitate or thoughtless step."

Poona, 3-3-'46
Harijan, 10-3-1946

33

SATYAGRAHA IN FACE OF HOOLIGANISM

A friend has gently posed the question as to what a Satyagrahi should do to prevent looting by *goondas*. If he had understood the secret of Satyagraha he would not have put it.

To lay down one's life, even alone, for what one considers to be right, is the very core of Satyagraha. More, no man can do. If a man is armed with a sword he might lop off a few heads but ultimately he must surrender to superior force or else die fighting. The sword of the Satyagrahi is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it. He will regard as brothers the hundreds of *goondas* that confront him and instead of trying to kill them he will choose to die at their hands and thereby live.

This is straight and simple. But how can a solitary Satyagrahi succeed in the midst of a huge population? Hundreds of hooligans were let loose on the city of Bombay for arson and loot. A solitary Satyagrahi will be like a drop in the ocean. Thus argues the correspondent.

My reply is that a Satyagrahi may never run away from danger, irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of many. He will have fully performed his duty if he dies fighting. The same holds good in armed warfare. It applies with greater force in Satyagraha. Moreover, the sacrifice of one will evoke the sacrifice of many and may possibly produce big results. There is always this possibility. But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results.

I believe that every man and woman should learn the art of self-defence in this age. This is done through arms in the West. Every adult man is conscripted for army training for a definite period. The training for Satyagraha is meant for all, irrespective of age or sex. The more important part of the training here is mental, not physical. There can be no compulsion in mental training. The surrounding atmosphere no doubt acts on the mind but that cannot justify compulsion.

It follows that shopkeepers, traders, mill-hands, labourers, farmers, clerks, in short, everyone ought to consider it his or her duty to get the necessary training in Satyagraha.

Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. This can only be effectively proved by demonstration, not by argument. It is the weapon that adorns the strong. It can never adorn the weak. By weak is meant the weak in mind and spirit, not in body. That limitation is a quality to be prized and not a defect to be deplored.

One ought also to understand one of its other limitations. It can never be used to defend a wrong cause.

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well known to the organizers. In this respect Satyagraha differs from armed defence. For the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a Satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in *ahimsa* and *satya*. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.

Poona, 6-3-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 17-3-1946

THE NON-VIOLENT SANCTION

Q. What is the place of Satyagraha in making the rich realize their duty towards the poor ? "

A. The same as against the foreign power. Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family its use can be extended to every other circle. Suppose a land-owner exploits his tenants and mulcts them of the fruit of their toil by appropriating it to his own use. When they expostulate with him he does not listen and raises objections that he requires so much for his wife, so much for his children and so on. The tenants or those who have espoused their cause and have influence will make an appeal to his wife to expostulate with her husband. She would probably say that for herself she does not need his exploited money. The children will say likewise that they would earn for themselves what they need.

Supposing further that he listens to nobody or that his wife and children combine against the tenants, they will not submit. They will quit if asked to do so but they will make it clear that the land belongs to him who tills it. The owner cannot till all the land himself and he will have to give in to their just demands. It may, however, be that the tenants are replaced by others. Agitation short of violence will then continue till the replacing tenants see their error and make common cause with the evicted tenants. Thus Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, such that it covers all the elements of society and in the end makes itself irresistible. Violence interrupts the process and prolongs the real revolution of the whole social structure.

The conditions necessary for the success of Satyagraha are: (1) The Satyagrahi should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The Satyagrahi must be prepared to suffer till the end.

Poona, 4-3-'46
Harijan, 31-3-1946

35

SATYAGRAHA — THE ART OF LIVING AND DYING

At the mammoth gathering numbering over two lakhs in Shivaji Park on 14-3-'46, Gandhiji delivered an important address in Hindustani, of which the following is the gist :

"I introduced the practice of having congregational prayer some time before the commencement of the South African Satyagraha struggle. The Indian community there was faced with a grave peril. We did all that was humanly possible. All methods of seeking redress, agitation through the Press and the platform, petitions and deputations, were tried but proved of no avail. What was the Indian community consisting of a mere handful of illiterate indentured labourers mostly, with a sprinkling of free merchants, hawkers etc. to do in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Negroes and Whites ? The Whites were fully armed. It was clear that if the Indians were to come into their own, they must forge a weapon which would be different from and infinitely superior to the force which the White settlers commanded in such ample measure. It was then that I introduced congregational prayer in Phœnix and Tolstoy Farm as a means for a training in the use of the weapon of Satyagraha or soul force.

"The root of Satyagraha is in prayer. A Satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against the tyranny of brute force. Why should you then be always afraid of the British or anybody playing you false ? If someone deceives you, he will be the loser. The fight of Satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid. Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying. Birth and death are inevitable among mortals. What distinguishes the man from the brute is his conscious striving to realize the spirit within. The last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the *Gita* which are recited at the prayer give in a nutshell the secret of the art of living. It is given there in the form of a description of a *sthitaprajna* or the man of steady wisdom i.e. a Satyagrahi, in reply to Arjun's query to Lord Krishna.

"The art of dying follows as a corollary from the art of living. Death must come to all. A man may die of a lightning stroke or as a result of heart failure or failure of respiration. But that is not the death that a Satyagrahi can wish for or pray for himself. The art of dying for a Satyagrahi consists in facing death cheerfully in the performance of one's duty. That is an art which the people of Bombay apparently have not yet learnt. It is not enough not to want to hurt or take the life of your enemy. You are no Satyagrahis if you remain silent or passive spectators while your enemy is being done to death. You must protect him even at the cost of your life. If thousands in India learnt that art, the face of India would be changed and no one would be able to point his finger of scorn at her non-violence as being a cloak for weakness. We would not then try to shift blame for ugly happenings on the hooligan elements. We would convert and control the hooligan elements too.

"We are passing through a crisis in our history. Danger besets us on all sides. But we shall convert it into our opportunity if we realize the power of Satyagraha than which there is nothing more potent on earth."

Uruli, 24-3-'46
Harijan, 7-4-1946

36

THOUGHTLESSNESS

"You are aware that *pari passu* with the growth of popular outbreaks the lawlessness of the military is also becoming more and more brutal. You have condemned the hooliganism of the masses but you say nothing about the brutality of the military."

This is a specimen of thoughtlessness. People have no right to commit excesses whereas the military is the very embodiment of madness. Condemnation of military madness would be meaningless when the very institution of the army is condemned. But criticism of their conduct becomes necessary as a warning to the Government. There is a time and occasion for everything. It would be out of place when condemning popular excesses.

What is the duty of a Satyagrahi General? Should he reform his own army or that of the opponent? If he reforms his own the power of the opposing force is sterilized. If the process continues over a sufficiently long period the opponent is *ipso facto* completely transformed. The critic's remarks can only be meant for me. Others have already condemned military excesses. In my opinion we have not as yet got sufficient material to judge them. I expect that this is being prepared. The duty of the people, however, is to turn the searchlight inwards. Too much brooding over the wrongs of others is apt to lead one imperceptibly to act likewise. It would then be a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Bombay, 15-3-'46
Harijan, 24-3-1946

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

37

IS EATING FISH VIOLENCE ?

Q. You say that those who eat fish should be provided with it. Does not this entail violence both for him who eats and him who provides the fish ?

A. Both commit violence. So do those who eat vegetables. This kind of violence is inherent in all embodied life, therefore, in man too. It is in this condition and in spite of it that we have to practise non-violence as a duty. I have often indicated how we may do so. The man who coerces another not to eat fish commits more violence than he who eats it. Fishermen, fish vendors and fish eaters are probably unaware of any violence in their action. Even if they were they might look upon it as unavoidable. But the man who uses coercion is guilty of deliberate violence. Coercion is inhuman. Those who quarrel among themselves, those who will stoop to anything in order to amass wealth, those who exploit or indulge in forced human labour, those who overload or goad or otherwise torture animals, all these knowingly commit such violence as can easily be stopped. I do not consider it violence to permit the fish eater to eat fish. It is my duty to suffer it. *Ahimsa* is the highest duty. Even if we cannot practise it in full, we must try to understand its spirit and refrain as far as is humanly possible from violence.

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Bombay, 11-3-'46
Harijan, 24-3-1946

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38

MARCH OF CIVILIZATION

Q. On page 91 of 'Harijan' dated 14-4-'46 it has been argued that the bullock is a living machine and that contact with such harmless animals is a potent factor in the onward march of human civilization. The animals are, however, made 'harmless' by making them 'impotent'. Is this the correct method of the onward march of civilization? If we have cows, we must have bulls. The bullock is a creation of human selfishness and cruelty. If not in thinking man, in the lower animals at any rate, all the force of their nature rages in the fury of the generative desire. Therefore, to turn the noble animal, the '*Vahana* of *Mahadev*' into a beast of burden is sad.

A. The writer is logical. But such logic would prevent the domestication of the cow. For there is probably more cruelty in domesticating the cow than in castrating the bull. It is a question of degree. Further march of civilization seems to imply increasing domination of man over beast, together with a growingly humane method of using them.

There are three schools of humanitarians. One believes in replacing animal power by the use of any other. Another believes in treating animals as fellow beings and making such use of them as a brotherly spirit will permit. The third will not make use of lower animals for man's selfish purpose but will employ instead one's own power and that of fellow beings to the extent that the latter give intelligent and willing use. I belong to the third school. It is possible by human labour, judiciously and humanely employed, to do fruit culture to a large extent and even corn culture. Indeed, as prisoners we civil resisters in Transvaal dug up stony ground for converting it into a municipal garden. No ploughing would have answered the purpose. The ground could yield only to the pickaxe.

The first I hold to be useless and even injurious in the end to mankind. A judicious combination of the other two seems to me to be the goal. I can see no escape from castration. The only thing to be done is to make it progressively humane.

A correspondent has brought forward in this connection the question of branding animals. Does the pain caused by branding compensate for the benefit it confers upon the owner and the animal? If it confers none on the animal, naturally branding must be taboo.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46
Harijan, 5-5-1946

39

THE MONKEY NUISANCE

People get weary of the trouble caused to them by monkeys. In their hearts they wish them dead. They are inwardly pleased if anyone kills them. At the same time they will oppose their slaughter. A friend who is well acquainted with the scriptures writes that monkeys ruin the crops, they even kidnap children and remove articles, and spoil fruit etc. Their number is daily increasing. I am asked as to what non-violence dictates in the matter.

My *ahimsa* is my own. I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the life of these animals who devour or cause hurt to man. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore, I will not feed ants, monkeys or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs.

Thinking along these lines I have come to the conclusion that to do away with monkeys where they have become a menace to the well-being of man is pardonable. Such killing becomes a duty. The question may arise as to why this rule should not also apply to human beings. It cannot because, however bad, they are as we are. Unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason.

New Delhi, 25-4-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 5-5-1946

40

RELIGION *v.* NO RELIGION

A correspondent writes:

"In the *Harijanbandhu* of the 5th May you have written that your non-violence contemplates destruction of animals dangerous to mankind, such as leopards, wolves, snakes, scorpions etc.

"You do not believe in giving food to dogs. etc. Several other people besides the Gujaratis look upon the feeding of dogs as a meritorious act. Such a belief may not be justifiable in times of food shortage like the present. Yet we must remember that these animals can be very useful to man. One can feed them and take work out of them.

"You had put 27 questions to Shri Raichandbhai from Durban. One of these questions was: 'What should a seeker do when a snake attacks him?' His answer was: 'He should not kill the snake and, if it bites, he should let it do so.' How is it that you speak differently now?"

I have written a lot on this subject in the past. At that time the topic was the killing of rabid dogs. There was much discussion on the subject but all that seems to have been forgotten.

My non-violence is not merely kindness to all living creatures. The emphasis laid on the sacredness of sub-human life in Jainism is understandable. But that can never mean that one is to be kind to this life in preference to human life. While writing about the sacredness of such life, I take it that the sacredness of human life has been taken for granted. The former has been over-emphasized. And, while putting it into practice, the idea has undergone distortion. For instance, there are many who derive complete satisfaction in feeding ants. It would appear that the theory has become a wooden, lifeless dogma. Hypocrisy and distortion are passing current under the name of religion.

Ahimsa is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never for the cowardly. To benefit by others' killing and delude oneself into the belief that one is being very religious and non-violent, is sheer self-deception.

A so-called votary of non-violence will not stay in a village which is visited by a leopard everyday. He will run away and, when someone has killed the leopard, will return to take charge of his hearth and home. This is not non-violence. This is a coward's violence. The man who has killed the leopard has at least given proof of some bravery. The man who takes advantage of the killing is a coward. He can never expect to know true non-violence.

In life it is impossible to eschew violence completely. The question arises, where is one to draw the line ? The line cannot be the same for everyone. Although essentially the principle is the same, yet everyone applies it in his or her own way. What is one man's food can be another's poison. Meat-eating is a sin for me. Yet, for another person, who has always lived on meat and never seen anything wrong in it, to give it up simply in order to copy me will be a sin.

If I wish to be an agriculturist and stay in the jungle, I will have to use the minimum unavoidable violence in order to protect my fields. I will have to kill monkeys, birds and insects which eat up my crops. If I do not wish to do so myself, I will have to engage someone to do it for me. There is not much difference between the two. To allow crops to be eaten up by animals in the name of *ahimsa* while there is a famine in the land is certainly a sin. Evil and good are relative terms. What is good under certain conditions can become an evil or a sin under a different set of conditions.

Man is not to drown himself in the well of *shastras* but he is to dive in their broad ocean and bring out pearls. At every step he has to use his discrimination as to what is *ahimsa* and what is *himsa*. In this there is no room for shame or cowardice. The poet has said that the road leading up to God is for the brave, never for the cowardly.

Finally, Raichandbhai's advice to me was that if I had courage, if I wanted to see God face to face, I should let myself be bitten by a snake instead of killing it. I have never killed a snake before or after receiving that letter. That is no matter of credit for me. My ideal is to be able to play with snakes and scorpions fearlessly. But it is merely a wish so far. Whether and when it will be realized I do not know. Everywhere I have let my people kill both. I could have prevented them if I had

wished. But how could I? I did not have the courage to take them up with my own hands and teach my companions a lesson in fearlessness. I am ashamed that I could not do so. But my shame could not benefit them or me.

If *Ramanama* favours me I might still attain that courage some day. In the meantime, I consider it my duty to act as I have stated above. Religion is a thing to be lived. It is not mere sophistry.

Mussoorie, 29-5-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 9-6-1946

41
WHY KILL?

The following suggestion has been received from Aligarh:

> "You write: 'We have to kill monkeys, birds and animals which ruin the crops, or else keep someone who will kill them for us.' In this connection I wish to submit that if other means can be found to keep them off the crops, killing should not be necessary. My uncle has been able to keep monkeys off his field by using strong electric light at night. Why cannot this method be given a wider trial?"

At first sight the suggestion seems attractive, but on deeper thought one finds that it won't work. I might be able to protect my own field in this manner, but what of those round about? It will not be right for me selfishly to save my crops at the cost of others. That will be violence in the name of non-violence. For instance, we throw a snake or rubbish from our own yard into that of our neighbour without compunction. True *ahimsa* demands that if we must save the society as well as ourselves from the mischief of monkeys and the like, we have to kill them. The general rule is that we must avoid violence to the utmost extent possible. Non-violence for the society is necessarily different from that for the individual. One living apart from society may defy all precaution, not so society as such.

Poona, 30-6-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 7-7-1946

42

ANIMAL SACRIFICE

A correspondent writes :

"The Harijans of Mysore regularly offer animal sacrifice in the temples there. In the Krishnarajanagar Taluka, pilgrimages to chosen areas take place annually for this purpose. One such took place from January 3rd to 25th this year, in which three or four goats were sacrificed daily.

"Another takes place every Saturday in the month of Shravan. In this not only Harijans but priests, the self-styled custodians of the Hindu religion, also take part. The participants indulge in drink too on these occasions.

"The most painful thing is that beef is eaten. It is a matter of utmost shame, too, for every Hindu that the killing of the animals takes place right in front of the temple—the house of God."

If what the writer says is true, it is indeed, in one sense, a matter of shame for every Hindu. But no sin can be wiped out by mere condemnation by word of mouth. Nor does the guilt of the whole body absolve the individual from his duty. Therefore, in my opinion, the responsibility of working for the reform rests, in the first instance, on the correspondent, secondly on the people of the place where the animal sacrifices are held, then on the Ruler of the State and his people and after them in turn on Karnatak, Madras Presidency and the whole of India. Only if all, in their respective places, take up the work systematically — and systematic work can only succeed if run on the basis of non-violence — can the evil that has been handed down through the ages be wiped out of existence.

Therefore, it is the correspondent who must make the beginning. I have written enough previously as to how the work of reform should be undertaken.

(From *Harijansevak*)

New Delhi, 15-6-'46
Harijan, 23-6-1946

43

CRUELTY TO THE DUMB CREATION

A Mysorean draws my attention to

"a small matter which however literally means life and death to the unfortunate dogs and cattle impounded in the Bangalore City pounds. The conditions there are very bad and the poor animals imprisoned for no fault of theirs are not properly fed nor given water. The lethal apparatus for the killing of dogs is out of order since some time and no attempts seem to have been made to repair it. The crude and cruel method of poisoning the animal is resorted to."

I have had the misfortune to advise the destruction of stray dogs. But that had to be, if men would be so cruel as, out of a false sense of pity, to feed *pariah* dogs and permit them to become a menace to the neighbouring population. But my advice can never include impounding such dogs and torturing them as those mentioned by my correspondent seem to have been. Humanitarian instinct demands destruction of such animals in an instantaneous and painless manner. I would love to hope that there is exaggeration in what the correspondent has stated. Anyway, the Municipality in question and all such other institutions should mend their manner if they do not satisfy the test demanded by humanity.

On the train to Calcutta, 29-10-'46
Harijan, 10-11-1946

44

DIFFERENCES WITH THE SOCIALISTS

Q. What is the difference between your technique and that of the Communists or Socialists for realizing the goal of economic equality ?

A. The Socialists and Communists say they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, when they get control over the State they will enforce equality. Under my plan the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception, if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying to do for the last fifty years or more, and so I claim to be a foremost Communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it.

Poona, 4-3-'46
Harijan, 31-3-1946

45

IMPLICATIONS OF 'QUIT INDIA'

In terms of non-violence 'Quit India' is a healthy, potent cry of the soul. It is not a slogan. It means the end, through means purely truthful and non-violent, of foreign rule and domination. It does not mean the foreigner's destruction but his willing conversion to Indian life. In this scheme there is no room for hatred of the foreigner. He is a man, even as we are. It is fear of him that gives rise to hatred. Fear gone, there can be no hatred.

Thus his conversion implies our conversion too. If we cease to be inferiors, he cannot be our superior. His arsenals and his weapons, typified in their extreme in the atom bomb, should have no terror for us. It follows that we may not covet them. We often make the mistake of thinking that we must first have things before we cease to covet them. This tempting argument leads to the prolongation of the agony. Must I do all the evil I can, before I learn to shun it ? Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it ? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.

Let us assume that foreign rule is ended. What should the foreigner do ? He could hardly be considered free when he was protected by British arms. As a free man, he will discover that it was wrong to possess privileges which the millions of India could not enjoy. He will live doing his duty as behoves a son of India. He will no longer live at India's expense. On the contrary, he will give India all his talents and by his services render himself indispensable to the land of his adoption.

If this is true of the European, how much more true must it be for those Anglo-Indians and others who have adopted European manners and customs in order to be classed as Europeans demanding preferential treatment ? All such people will find themselves ill at ease, if they expect continuation of the favoured treatment hitherto enjoyed by them. They should rather feel thankful that they will be disburdened of preferential treatment

to which they had no right by any known canon of reasoning and which was derogatory to their dignity.

We have all — rulers and ruled — been living so long in a stifling unnatural atmosphere that we might well feel in the beginning that we have lost the lungs for breathing the invigorating ozone of freedom. If the reality comes in an orderly, that is a non-violent manner because the parties feel that it is right, it will be a revealing lesson for the world.

Uruli, 29-3-'46
Harijan 7-4-1946

46

WITH AN ENGLISH FRIEND

"I have often thought over it," remarked an English friend who visited Gandhiji during his stay at Sodepur, "and it has always baffled me how these Bengali young men, so gentle by nature, have drifted into violence.

The Spectre of Violence

"I have solved it for myself," replied Gandhiji. "They feel they have been unjustly libelled in the past. Lord Curzon harped upon their softness. It soured them. So they say, 'We may not be wealthy, but surely we are not effeminate.' So they adopted this devious method and surpassed every other province in daring. They defied death, defied poverty and even public opinion. I have discussed this question of violence threadbare with so many terrorists and anarchists. It is terrible whether the Arab does it or the Jew. It is a bad outlook for the world, if this spirit of violence takes hold of the mass mind. Ultimately in destroying itself it destroys the race."

"And it has spread all over the world for the last two or three years," interpolated the friend.

Gandhiji resumed: "Look at the latest ukase of Gen. MacArthur. He has divided the entire Japanese nation into two categories, those whom he calls war criminals and those who do not come under that label. As I read it, it struck me that this

was not the best way to introduce democracy among the Japanese — a race so proud, so sensitive, so highly organized along Western lines. They will do what the Italians did in Garibaldi's time on a much larger scale. You cannot deal with the human race on these lines. Whatever happens in one part of the world will affect the other parts. The world has so shrunk."

Is the World Going Back?

This evoked from the friend the observation that he did not think that the world had deteriorated so much theoretically as it might have during the last three years. Gandhiji agreed with him though his grounds, he remarked, were different.

"My reason for that belief," continued the friend, "is that in spite of the fact that suffering, for instance, in Indonesia and elsewhere has been appalling during the last three years, the human mind has not been equally warped."

Gandhiji: "My hope is based on a detached view of the situation. Whilst in detention in the Aga Khan Palace I had leisure to read and think. What struck me was that whilst practice showed deterioration the mind of men had very much progressed. Practice has not been able to keep pace with the mind. Man has begun to say, 'This is wrong, that is wrong.' Whereas previously he justified his conduct, he now no longer justifies his own or his neighbour's. He wants to set right the wrong but does not know that his own practice fails him. The contradiction between his thought and conduct fetters him. His conduct is not governed by logic. Then, of course, there is my standing prediction in favour of non-violence that it will prevail — whatever man may or may not do. That keeps my optimism alive. Extensive personal experience too confirms my belief that non-violence is self-acting. It will have its way and overcome all obstacles irrespective of the shortcomings of the instruments. "It makes no difference," he concluded, "how we arrive at our conclusion, but it keeps us fresh and green."

Poona, 2-3-'46

Harijan, 7-4-1946

47

LET US PRAY

There is little doubt that India is about to reach her cherished goal of political independence. Let the entrance be prayerful. Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.

Let us then pray and find out what we have meant by non-violence and how we shall retain the freedom gained by its use. If our non-violence is of the weak, it follows that we shall never be able, by such non-violence, to retain freedom. But it follows also that we shall not, for some length of time at any rate, be able to defend ourselves by force of arms if only because we have neither them nor the knowledge of their use. We have not even the requisite discipline. The result is that we shall have to rely upon another nation's help, not as equals but as pupils upon their teachers, if the word 'inferiors' jars upon our ears.

Hence there is nothing but non-violence to fall back upon for retaining our freedom even as we had to do for gaining it. This means exercise of non-violence against all those who call themselves our opponents. This should not mean much for a man who has used himself to non-violence for nearly three decades. It is summed up in "die for your honour and freedom" instead of "kill if necessary and be killed in the act". What does a brave soldier do? He kills only if necessary and risks his life in the act. Non-violence demands greater courage and sacrifice. Why should it be comparatively easy for a man to risk death in the act of killing and almost superhuman for him to do so in the act of sparing life? It seems to be gross self-deception to think that we can risk death if we learn and practise the art of killing but cannot do so otherwise. But for the hypnotism induced by the repetition of an untruth we should not grossly deceive ourselves.

But the critic or the scoffer will ask, why bring in prayer if the matter is so simple as you put it? The answer is that prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning the noble and

brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour.

Undoubtedly prayer requires a living faith in God. Successful Satyagraha is inconceivable without that faith. God may be called by any other name so long as it connotes the living Law of Life — in other words, the Law and the Law-giver rolled into one.

New Delhi, 6-4-'46
Harijan, 14-4-1946

48

SWEEPERS' STRIKE

There are certain matters in which strikes would be wrong. Sweepers' grievances come in this category. I do not want to go into others here. My opinion against sweepers' strikes dates back to about 1897 when I was in Durban. A general strike was mooted there and the question arose as to whether scavengers should join in it. My vote was registered against the proposal. Just as man cannot live without air so too he cannot exist for long if his home and surroundings are not clean. One or other epidemic is bound to break out especially when modern drainage is put out of action.

Therefore I was perturbed when I read about the sweepers' strike in Bombay. Fortunately it has come to an end. I understand, however, that the sweepers, both men and women, refused to submit their case to arbitration.

In spite of my close attachment to sweepers, better because of it, I must denounce the coercive methods they are said to have employed. They will thereby be losers in the long run. City folk will not always be cowed down. If they were, it would mean the collapse of municipal administration. Coercion cannot but result in the end in chaos. An impartial tribunal for settling disputes should always be accepted. Refusal is a sign of weakness. A *bhangi* may not give up his work even for a day. And there are many other ways open to him of securing justice.

Townspeople should, on the other hand, forget that there is such a thing as untouchability and learn the art of cleaning their own and the city's drains, so that if a similar occasion arises they are not nonplussed and can render the necessary temporary service. They may not be coerced. I go so far as to say that the military who know this work should be used for such emergency. If Swaraj is round the bend, we can now look upon the military as ours and need have no hesitation in taking all the constructive work we can from them. Up till now they have only been employed in indiscriminate firing on us. Today they must plough the land, dig wells, clean latrines and do every other constructive work that they can, and thus turn the people's hatred of them into love.

Now that the hartal is at an end, it is the duty of everyone to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the *bhangis*, educate them, see that they are properly housed, permit them, like anyone else, to live wherever they choose, look in the matter of an equitable wage for them and see that justice is meted out to them without their having to demand it. If this is done throughout India we shall definitely prove ourselves worthy of Swaraj and be able also to maintain it.

New Delhi, 15-4-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 21-4-1946

49

PEACEFUL STRIKES

Q. How should a strike be conducted so that hooliganism and violence are avoided?

A. A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organized without any compulsion there would be no chance for goondaism and looting. Such a strike would be characterized by perfect co-operation amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force. The strikers should take up some work either singly or in co-operation with each other, in order to earn their bread. The nature of such work should have been thought out beforehand. It goes without saying that in a peaceful, effective and firm strike of this character, there will be no room for rowdyism or looting. I have known of such strikes. I have not presented a Utopian picture.

New Delhi, 26-5-'46
Harijan, 2-6-1946

50

STRIKES

The statement in the daily press that I had approved of the postal strike is not true. One day a postman asked to be allowed to just say *Vande Mataram* to me. Kanu Gandhi brought him to me. The visitor, however, asked for my blessings for the postmen's strike which had just then commenced. I said to him that if the strike was justified and if they conducted themselves absolutely peacefully, they must succeed. This was no approval of the particular strike. Apart, however, from what I said and apart from the merits of the postmen's strike, I feel that as an expert in successful strikes of an absolutely peaceful nature, I owe it to the conductor of this strike as those of all others and the public to state the conditions of successful strikes.

Obviously there should be no strike which is not justifiable on merits. No unjust strike should succeed. All public sympathy must be withheld from such strikes.

The public has no means of judging the merits of a strike, unless it is backed by impartial persons enjoying public confidence. Interested men cannot judge the merits of their own case. Hence, there must be an arbitration accepted by the parties or a judicial adjudication. As a rule, the matter does not come before the public when there is accepted arbitration or adjudication. Cases have, however, happened when haughty employers have ignored awards, or misguided employees, conscious of their power to assert themselves, have done likewise and have decided upon forcible extortion.

Strikes for economic betterment should never have a political end as an ulterior motive. Such a mixture never advances the political end and generally brings trouble upon strikes, even when they do not dislocate public life, as in the case of public utility services, such as the postal strike. The Government may suffer some inconvenience, but will not come to a standstill. Rich persons will put up expensive postal services but the vast mass of the poor people will be deprived during such a strike of a convenience of primary importance to which they have become used for generations. Such strikes can only take place when every other legitimate means has been adopted and failed.

In the present case we have National Provincial Governments. Postmen should consult these Governments before resorting to the extreme step. So far as I am aware, Shri Balasaheb Kher, Shri Mangaldas Pakwasa and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel have intervened. If their advice has been rejected by the men, they have taken a serious and dangerous step. If all these powerful unions disregard their own Governments and the Working Committee members, they disown the Congress. They have a right to do so, if the Congress sells their interest.

Sympathetic strikes must be taboo until it is conclusively proved that the affected men have exhausted all the legitimate means at their disposal and until the Congress has been proved to have betrayed or neglected their interest or until the Con-

gress has called for sympathetic strikes, in order to secure justice from obdurate and unsympathetic authorities.

One hears of strikes all over the country to paralyse the Government. This paralysis is an extreme political step, open only to a body like the Congress, not even to unions, however powerful they may be. If the Congress is the people's arm *par excellence* for the purpose of winning Independence, paralysing action should be retained solely in the hands of the Congress.

At the present moment, the Congress is engaged in making a success of the proposed Constituent Assembly. There are interminable difficulties in the way. Paralysing strikes must seriously hamper Congress action.

It follows from the foregoing that political strikes must be treated on their own merits and must never be mixed with or related to economic strikes. Political strikes have a definite place in non-violent action. They are never taken up haphazard. They must be open, never led by *goondaism*. They are calculated never to lead to violence.

Therefore, my humble suggestion to all strikers is to make a frank declaration of submission to arbitration or adjudication, to seek the guidance of the Congress and abide by its advice and for all sympathetic strikers to stop, whilst the Congress is engaged in making the contemplated Constituent Assembly a success and while Provincial National Governments are functioning.

Uruli-Kanchan, 3-8-'46
Harijan, 11-8-1946

51

NON-VIOLENT STRIKES

"Do you feel there is any special significance in the increasing number and magnitude of labour strikes, especially in India of late ?" Gandhiji was asked. "What do you think will be the outcome of this labour trouble in India ?"

"Strikes have today become a universal plague," he replied. "There are strikes everywhere, America and England not excepted. But in India they have a special significance. We are living under an unnatural condition. As soon as the lid is removed and there is a crevice letting in the fresh air of freedom, there will be an increasing number of strikes. The fundamental reason for this spreading strike fever is that life here as elsewhere, is today uprooted from its basis, the basis of religion, and what an English writer has called 'cash nexus' has taken its place. And that is a precarious bond. But even when the religious basis is there, there will be strikes, because it is scarcely conceivable that religion will have become for all the basis of life. So, there will be attempts at exploitation on the one hand, and strikes on the other. But these strikes will then be of a purely non-violent character. Such strikes never do harm to anyone. It was such a strike perhaps that brought General Smuts to his knees. "If you had hurt an Englishman," said Jan Smuts, "I would have shot you, even deported your people. As it is, I have put you in prison and tried to subdue you and your people in every way. But how long can I go on like this when you do not retaliate ?" And so he had to come to terms with a mere *coolie* on behalf of *coolies* as all Indians were then called in South Africa."

New Delhi, 16-9-'46
Harijan, 22-9-1946

52

ROWDYISM IN ELECTIONS

Q. You are no doubt aware of the rowdyism resulting in severe damage during one of the recent elections in Bombay. Does it become the teacher of *ahimsa* to keep silent on such an occasion ?

A. I do not want to enter into the question of whether silence becomes me or not. If the rowdyism is not a forerunner of what the future holds, it will be wrong to take note of it. Such sporadic clashes should not worry us. The education of the masses in *ahimsa* can make way gradually. It may be that it will develop from the lessons learnt from such happenings. But it may be that this rowdyism is symptomatic of an epidemic. Many people imagine that they alone are right and everyone else wrong, and they do not consider that there is anything unworthy in forcing their point of view down others' throats. This error has to be rectified. If we are in the right we must have infinite patience.

Just now we seem unable to see our own mistakes. Those who lack the faculty of reason, or who desire to live for the sake of enjoyment, can never see the error. If there are many such, then we must conclude that our non-violence has been a weapon of the weak, *himsa* masquerading in the guise of *ahimsa*. If this weakness continues we shall have to go through rivers of blood once the British rule goes. We may even come under the sway of some other foreign power or it may be that with internecine warfare the weaker side will have to submit to the one that has the mightier weapons. If we are unfortunate enough to witness such strife, believers in non-violence will joyfully die in the effort to stop it and thereby live.

My hope is that the masses have sufficiently imbibed the spirit of *ahimsa* and that when the British go, there may be a little fight here and there and then we shall settle down as brothers giving a lesson of peace to the world.

Only those who fought in Bombay know what good they achieved by fighting. I am ignorant of who fought and what the fight was about and what were the gains if any.

New Delhi, 22-4-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 28-4-1946

53

MERCY v. RUTHLESSNESS

The virtues of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested only when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth.

If this is true, then it is incorrect to say that *ahimsa* is of no avail before a murderer. It can certainly be said that to experiment with *ahimsa* in face of a murderer is to seek self-destruction. But this is the real test of *ahimsa*. He who gets himself killed out of sheer helplessness, however, can in nowise be said to have passed the test. He who when being killed bears no anger against his murderer and even asks God to forgive him is truly non-violent. History relates this of Jesus Christ. With his dying breath on the cross, he is reported to have said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." We can get similar instances from other religions but the quotation is given because it is world famous.

It is another matter that our non-violence has not reached such heights. It would be wholly wrong for us to lower the standard of *ahimsa* by reason of our own frailty or lack of experience. Without true understanding of the ideal, we can never hope to reach it. It is necessary for us, therefore, to apply our reason to understand the power of non-violence.

New Delhi, 21-4-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 28-4-1946

54

NON-VIOLENT VOLUNTEER CORPS

Some time ago an attempt was made, at my instance, to form *shanti dals* but nothing came of it. This lesson, however, was learnt that the membership, in its very nature, of such organizations could not be large. Ordinarily, the efficient running of a large volunteer corps based on force implies the possibility of the use of force in the event of breach of discipline. In such bodies little or no stress is laid on a man's character. Physique is the chief factor. The contrary must obtain in non-violent bodies in which character or soul force must mean everything and physique must take second place. It is difficult to find many such persons. That is why non-violent corps must be small, if they are to be efficient. Such brigades may be scattered all over; there may be one each for a village or a *mohalla*. The members must know one another well. Each corps will select its own head. All the members will have the same status, but where everyone is doing the same work there must be one person under whose discipline all must come, or else the work will suffer. Where there are two or more brigades the leaders must consult among themselves and decide on a common line of action. In that way alone lies success.

If non-violent volunteer corps are formed on the above lines, they can easily stop trouble. These corps will not require all the physical training given in *akhadas*, but a certain part of it will be necessary.

One thing, however, should be common to members of all such organizations and that is implicit faith in God. He is the only companion and doer. Without faith in Him these peace brigades will be lifeless. By whatever name one calls God, one must realize that one can only work through His strength. Such a man will never take another's life. He will allow himself, if need be, to be killed and thereby live through his victory over death.

The mind of the man in whose life the realization of this law has become a living reality will not be bewildered in a crisis. He will instinctively know the right way to act.

In spite, however, of what I have said above I would like to give some rules culled from my own experience :

1. A volunteer may not carry any weapons.
2. The members of a corps must be easily recognizable.
3. Every volunteer must carry bandages, scissors, needle and thread, surgical knife etc. for rendering first aid.
4. He should know how to carry and remove the wounded.
5. He should know how to put out fires, how to enter a fire area without getting burnt, how to climb heights for rescue work and descend safely with or without his charge.
6. He should be well acquainted with all the residents of his locality. This is a service in itself.
7. He should recite *Ramanama* ceaselessly in his heart and persuade others who believe to do likewise.

There are many who, whether from mental laziness or from having fallen into a bad habit believe that God is and will help us unasked. Why then is it necessary to recite His name ? It is true that if God is, He is irrespective of our belief. But realization of God is infinitely more than mere belief. That can come only by constant practice. This is true of all science. How much more true of the science of all sciences ?

Man often repeats the name of God parrot-wise and expects fruit from so doing. The true seeker must have that living faith which will not only dispel the untruth of parrot-wise repetition from within him but also from the hearts of others.

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

New Delhi, 26-4-'46
Harijan, 5-5-1946

55

INDEPENDENCE

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that independence of my dream means *Ramarajya* i.e. the Kingdom of God on earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

'Economic' means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of *Ramarajya* excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the war for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech* uttered words of wis-

*The following is Mr. Churchill's speech referred to above:

The world is very ill. This is the time when hatred is rife in the world and when many mighty branches of the human family, victors or vanquished, innocent or guilty, are plunged in bewilderment, distress or ruin. Two fearful wars in our life-time have torn the heart out of its grace and culture.

Measureless injury has been done to much that the 19th century would have called 'Christian civilization', for all the leading nations have been racked by stresses which have blunted their sensibilities and have destroyed their agreeable modes of social intercourse.

dom from the standpoint of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. In another column I reproduce the summary of his speech as reported in the public Press. Only I must warn the public against the pessimistic note underlying the speech. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The blood-letting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other peoples' blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission 'delivers the goods', India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would

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Only science has rolled forward, whipped by the fierce winds of mortal war, and science has placed in the hands of men agencies of destruction far beyond any development of their commonsense or virtue.

In a world where over-production of food was formerly from time to time a problem, famine has laid its gaunt fingers upon the peoples of many lands and scarcity upon all.

The psychic energies of mankind have been exhausted by the tribulations through which they have passed and are still passing. It is not only bloodletting that has weakened and whitened us.

The vital springs of human inspiration are, for the moment, drained. There must be a period of recovery. Mankind cannot, in its present plight, bear new shocks and quarrels without taking to altogether cruder and primordial forms.

Yet we do not know that the hatreds and confusion which are found will not confront us with even harder trials than those we have so narrowly and painfully survived.

In many countries, where even united efforts would fall short of what is needed, party strife and faction is fomented or machine-made and skeleton fanatics rave at each other about their rival ideologies.

All the while, the ordinary folk of every country show themselves kindly and brave and serviceable to their fellow men. Yet, they are driven against one another by forces and organizations and doctrines as wantonly and remorselessly as they ever were in the ages of absolute emperors and kings.

There never was a time when breathing space was more needed, a blessed convalescence, a truce of God and man.

Statesman, 29-4-'46

be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46
Harijan, 5-5-1946

56

CERTAIN QUESTIONS

A London friend has put seven questions on the working of non-violence. Though similar questions have been dealt with in *Young India* or *Harijan*, it is profitable to answer them in a single article, if perchance the answers may prove helpful.

Q. 1. Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder ? Or is it necessary that people wanting to offer non-violent resistance should first of all divest themselves of State-authority and place themselves *vis-a-vis* the opponent entirely in a private capacity ?

A. It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i.e. it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits.

Q. 2. Do you think that it would be possible for a Congress government to deal with foreign aggression or internal riots in an entirely non-violent manner ?

A. It is certainly possible for a Congress government to deal with "foreign aggression or internal riots" in a non-violent manner. That the Congress may not share my belief is quite possible. If the Congress changes its course, the change will prove nothing save that the non-violence hitherto offered was of the weak and that the Congress has no faith in State non-violence.

Q. 3. Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully?

A. The bully has his opportunity when he has to face non-violence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. 4. What policy would you advocate if a section of the Indian people tries to enforce by sword a selfish measure which is not only repugnant to others but also basically unjust? While it is possible for an unofficial organization to offer non-violent resistance in such a case, is it also possible for the government of the day to do so?

A. The question assumes a case which can never exist. A non-violent State must be broad-based on the will of an intelligent people, well able to know its mind and act up to it. In such a State the assumed section can only be negligible. It can never stand against the deliberate will of the overwhelming majority represented by the State. The government of the day is not outside the people. It is the will of the overwhelming majority. If it is expressed non-violently, it cannot be a majority of one but nearer 99 against 1 in a hundred.

Q. 5. Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong more effective than that by the militarily weak?

A. This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents. Those who are strong in non-violence will not mind whether they are opposed by the militarily weak people or the strongest.

Q. 6. What should be the training and discipline for a non-violent army? Should not certain aspects of conventional military training form a part of the syllabus?

A. A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

Q. 7. Is it not better under existing circumstances that countries like India and England should maintain full military efficiency while resolving to give non-violent resistance a reasonable trial before taking any military step?

A. The foregoing answers should make it clear that under no circumstances can India and England give non-violent resistance a reasonable chance whilst they are both maintaining full military efficiency. At the same time it is perfectly true that all military powers carry on negotiations for peaceful adjustment of rival disputes. But here we are not discussing preliminary peace parleys before appealing to the arbitrament of war. We are discussing a final substitute for armed conflict called war, in naked terms mass murder.

Simla, 2-5-'46
Harijan, 12-5-1946

57

NON-VIOLENCE AND KHADI

The Congress constitution is undergoing a radical change. The supreme change that is desirable for the sake of avoiding untruth and hypocrisy is to remove the words "legitimate and peaceful" from the first article of the Congress constitution as also the clause about Khadi. Experience shows that the people who form the bulk of Congressmen are not wedded either to truth and non-violence or to Khadi. As an ardent lover of truth and non-violence and Khadi as their symbol, I make bold to suggest that these clauses should go. It will be open to anyone to be truthful and non-violent and to wear Khadi if he or she chooses to. Only there will be no deception practised on India or the world. Paradoxical as it may appear we shall be more healthful, more non-violent and better Khadi lovers with the suggested amendment than without. It should be remembered that I myself had at one time moved the removal of these clauses. I was glad I was defeated. It was wrong to be glad. I shall be sorry if my suggestion is rejected even now. Let it not be said of us that we prize hypocrisy above truth.

Simla, 8-5-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 19-5-1946

58

THE ATOM BOMB

There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this I know that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman, and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours.

Harijan, 10-2-1946

59

HOW CAN VIOLENCE BE STOPPED?

Q. Some time back a military officer in Poona, who is about to return to England, said to me that violence was on the increase in India and would further increase as people were gradually turning away from the path of non-violence. "We in the West" he said, "not only believe in violence but our society is based on it. Several subject races have won their independence through violence and are today living in peace. We have discovered the atom bomb for stopping violence. The last great war is a case in point." Continuing the military officer said, "Gandhiji has shown your people the way of non-violence. Has he discovered any such power as the atom bomb which will at once convert people to non-violence and bring about a rule of peace? Cannot Gandhiji's 'atom bomb' stop people from following the path of violence? Ask Gandhiji to exercise his power over the people and tell them to give up all thoughts of violence and adopt his creed. If he cannot wean his people today from the terrible violence that is spreading all over the country, I tell you that he will live a disappointed man and his life's work will be ruined."

A. There is much confusion of thought in this question. The atom bomb has not stopped violence. People's hearts are full of it and preparations for a third world war may even be said to be going on. While it would be absurd to say that violence has ever brought peace to mankind it cannot either be said that violence never achieves anything.

That I shall have to repent if I cannot stop violence does not enter into the picture of non-violence. No man can stop violence. God alone can do so. Men are but instruments in His hands. Here material means cannot stop violence but this does not mean that material means should not be employed for the purpose. The deciding factor is God's grace. He works according to His law and, therefore, violence will also be stopped in accordance with that law. Man does not and can never know God's law fully. Therefore we have to try as far as lies in our power.

I hold that our experiment in non-violence has succeeded to a fair extent in India. There is, therefore, no room for the pessimism shown in the question. Finally *ahimsa* is one of the world's great principles which no power on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal but *ahimsa* will never die. And the gospel of *ahimsa* can be spread only through believers dying for the cause.

Simla, 9-5-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 19-5-1946

60

ATOM BOMB AND AHIMSA

It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *ahimsa* (non-violence) as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But that is God's, not man's plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good.

That atomic energy though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes may be utilized by other scientists for humanitarian purposes is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and nefarious purpose, a housewife makes daily use of it in preparing nourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we

know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred. I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It was as old as the hills. Only I recited no copy-book maxim but definitely announced what I believed in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which experience of friends has fortified. It is however the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

Poona, 1-7-'46
Harijan, 7-7-1946

61

WITH AN ENGLISH JOURNALIST

An English friend enquired :

"Was the world progressing ? Had the making of life and struggle for existence easier in the modern world resulted in the dulling of man's instincts and sensibilities ?"

"If that is your comment, I will subscribe to it," replied Gandhiji.

"And the atom bomb ?"

"O, on that point you can proclaim to the whole world without hesitation," exclaimed Gandhiji, "that I am beyond repair. I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science."

What was the antidote ? Had it antiquated non-violence ? "No," was Gandhiji's reply. On the contrary, non-violence was the only thing that was now left in the field. "It is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy. I did not move a muscle when I first heard that the atom bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to myself, 'Unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.'"

New Delhi, 24-9-'46
Harijan, 29-9-1946

62

THE SPINNING WHEEL AND THE ATOM BOMB

Mr. Andrew Freeman of the *New York Post*, who took lessons in spinning with Kanu Gandhi, followed up the subject on return from his assignment in the N. W. F. P. tour with Pandit Nehru by an interview with Gandhiji. He had come to Gandhiji with the assumption that the spinning wheel had a cultural and therapeutic value especially for the malaise from which the West was suffering and which had culminated in the atom bomb.

"Has the spinning wheel a message for America? Can it serve as a counter weapon to the atom bomb ?" he asked.

"I do feel," replied Gandhiji, "that it has a message for the U. S. A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning wheel its own, which it has not done today. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and of the world lies in the wheel. If India became the slave of the machine, then, I say, heaven save the world."

"India," he continued, "has a far nobler mission, viz. to establish friendship and peace in the world. Peace cannot be established through mere conferences. Peace is being broken, as we all see, even while conferences are being held."

"It seems so tragic," remarked Mr. Freeman. "India must lead the way and India is in turmoil. If any country can really take up the wheel, it is India. Do you think it will ?"

"It is doing so," replied Gandhiji, "but I confess the process is very slow. Pandit Nehru called Khadi the "livery of our freedom". It cannot be that, so long as it is the consolation of cranks and paupers only. There are many things that are not possible for man to accomplish. But everything is possible for God. If there is no living power called God, the spinning wheel has no place."

"Those who spin are not called cranks here ?" asked Mr. Freeman with some concern.

"No. I used that expression to anticipate what Americans would say. I allow myself to be called by that name to protect myself. I was described by a friend as a 'practical idealist'."

"As a fairly intelligent human being and an American I can only say," remarked Mr. Freeman, "that though many Americans would call spinners cranks, there are not a few who are thinking hard. Something has to be found, that would save civilization from destruction. Life must be simplified."

"Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way," replied Gandhiji. "I stand by what is implied in the phrase 'Unto This Last'. That book marked the turning point in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning wheel symbolizes."

Harijan, 17-11-1946

63

A FAIR HIT

A correspondent writes:

> "A report from New Delhi dated 16th April, published in the "Times of India" of the 18th says that at a prayer meeting held on Tuesday evening you said:
>
> "1. 'The machinery and even engineers were all foreign. He had no enmity with machinery. Mills, he said, could not remove the poverty of India, but on the other hand had deprived crores of villagers of their work and practically ruined them. Those Indians responsible for ruining the villages had become foreigners and as such they should live in foreign countries.'
>
> "How can you reconcile this statement with the gentlemen who form the Board of Trustees of the Kasturba Memorial Fund, the primary aim of which is to improve conditions in villages. The majority of these gentlemen are industrialists and owners of mills. Can they, who are responsible for ruining the villages, and still continue to ruin them by their mills, be ever capable of sincere help in improving the condition of villagers?
>
> "2. You have so often talked and written against the curse of black markets. How many of the trustees of the Kasturba

Memorial Fund can lay their hands on their hearts and say they have not dealt in the black market either as buyers or sellers ? "

This is a fair hit. That mill-owners and such others have joined the Kasturba Trust is a compliment to my *ahimsa.* Though I express my opinions strongly, there is no sting in them, nothing personal. I have no sense of shame in befriending mill-owners whose business, I hold, should be stopped, not forcibly but by reason. Education of the public could bring about results which no force can. I must say in favour of the capitalist class trustees that they never interfered with the decision of non-capitalist trustees. Indeed, they have always helped by their knowledge. The combination is good and beneficial to the Trust. Their sincerity cannot be questioned ; for, they have faith in their capacity and the modern trend.

As to black markets, I do not know that any of the trustees have black market dealings. But should I discover any, I should think twice before inviting them to leave the Trust. They have not imposed themselves on the Trust.

Delhi, 21-5-'46
Harijan, 26-5-1946

64

BONDAGE OF LOVE

Commenting on the *bhajan* of the evening "*Sabase unchi prem sagai*" Gandhiji said that in that song the poet had sung of the bondage of love or *ahimsa*. There was no bond higher or stronger than that of love. Under the power of Sudama's love Lord Krishna had accepted the former's gift of broken rice taken out of a dirty rag, and had preferred to partake of the simple greens and herbs of Vidura in preference to Duryodhana's rare and luscious fruit. Again, it was in return for Arjuna's loving devotion that he had forgotten his royalty and became Arjuna's charioteer, and we are told that it was the mastery of his art that contributed more to Arjuna's victory than the might of the latter's bow. Service of love was the highest service one could render to another. It asked for no consideration or return. "Love becomes a sordid bargain when it asks for return or compensation; it degrades. Spontaneous service of love purifies and elevates."

New Delhi, 27-5-'46
Harijan, 2-6-1946

LOOTING

Q. A correspondent writes:

"Supposing that in a Government or private godown food grains are being allowed to rot while people are starving because none are available in the market, what are workers to do? Would it be permissible to resort to something in the nature of your Dharasana salt raid in order to save the people? Otherwise, what alternative is there to either looting or dying like dumb cattle, of both of which you disapprove?"

A. It should be common cause that looting in itself can never do any good. Wherever it is claimed to have done so, the good consisted only in drawing the attention of the authority to a crying want. The way of voluntary fasting that I have suggested is the most efficient because it is good in itself and good also as an effective demonstration. It is good in itself because the people who voluntarily fast exhibit strength of will which saves them from the pangs of hunger and wakes up public conscience as also that of the authority, assuming that the latter can have any conscience at all.

So far as the Dharasana salt raid is concerned, apart from the fact that there were, according to my conception of it, several mistakes made, it was a perfect thing of its kind and a heroic struggle in which the sufferings undergone were bravely borne. But the distinction between it and loot should be clearly borne in mind. The Dharasana Salt Works were conceived to be national property. The intention there was not to seize the property by force. The fight was to assert the right of the nation to the possession of all salt yielded by land or sea in India. If the raid had succeeded, that is to say, if the Government had yielded, they would have done so to the nation's sufferings which the raid and the like involved. And, as a matter of fact, the sum total of the sufferings undergone by the people on a nation-wide scale did result in what is known as the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. Thus it will be seen that between the loot that the correspondent has in mind and the Dharasana Raid there is no analogy whatsoever.

New Delhi, 13-6-'46

Harijan, 23-6-1946

66

TRUTH OR AHIMSA ?

"You have brought us to the threshold of independence, Gandhiji," remarked a privileged friend who had a talk with him on an evening, "and we cannot feel too grateful for it. You will, of course, give entire credit for it to *ahimsa* — that being your pet child. But we feel that we have derived more strength from truth than your *ahimsa*."

"You are wrong in thinking," replied Gandhiji, "that in my partiality for *ahimsa* I have given to truth the second place. You are equally wrong in thinking that the country has derived more strength from truth than from *ahimsa*. On the contrary, I am firmly convinced that whatever progress the country has made, is due to its adoption of *ahimsa* as its method of struggle."

"I mean the country has not understood your *ahimsa* but it understood truth and that has filled it with strength," rejoined the friend.

"It is just the contrary," replied Gandhiji. "There is so much of untruth in the country. I feel suffocated sometimes. I am convinced therefore, that it must be the practice of *ahimsa* alone, however faulty, that has brought us so far."

"Moreover, I have not given truth the second place as you seem to think," he continued and described how at a meeting at Geneva he had flabbergasted everybody by remarking that whereas he used to say that God is Truth, he had since come to hold that Truth is God.

"Nevertheless, your emphasis is always on *ahimsa*. You have made propagation of non-violence the mission of your life," argued the friend, still unwilling to concede the point.

"There again you are wrong," replied Gandhiji. "*Ahimsa* is not the goal. Truth is the goal. But we have no means of realizing truth in human relationships except through the practice of *ahimsa*. A steadfast pursuit of *ahimsa* is inevitably bound to truth — not so violence. That is why I swear by *ahimsa*. Truth came naturally to me. *Ahimsa* I acquired after a struggle. But *ahimsa* being the means we are naturally more

concerned with it in our everyday life. It is *ahimsa*, therefore, that our masses have to be educated in. Education in truth follows from it as a natural end."

New Delhi, 17-6-'46
Harijan, 23-6-1946

67

THE REAL DANGER

As during the two days of the session of the A. I. C. C. in Bombay I listened to some of the spirited speeches against the Working Committee's resolution submitted to the A. I. C. C. for ratification, I could not subscribe to the dangers portrayed by the opposition. No confirmed Satyagrahi is dismayed by the dangers, seen or unseen, from his opponent's side. What he must fear, as every army must, is the danger from within.

Opposition, however eloquent it may be, will defeat its purpose if it is not well informed, balanced and well-based and does not promise action and result more attractive than what is opposed. Let the opposition at the late meeting answer.

My purpose here is merely to point out the danger from within. The first in importance is laziness of mind and body. This comes out of the smug satisfaction that Congressmen having suffered imprisonment have nothing more to do to win freedom, and that a grateful organization should reward their service by giving them first preference in the matter of elections and offices. And so, there is an unseemly and vulgar competition for gaining what are described as prize posts. Here there is a double fallacy. Nothing should be considered a prize in the Congress dictionary and imprisonment is its own reward. It is the preliminary examination of a Satyagrahi. Its goal is the slaughter house even as that of the spotless lamb. Jail-going is, instead, being used as a passport to every office accessible to the Congress. Hence there is every prospect of Satyagrahi imprisonment becoming a degrading occupation like that of professional thieves and robbers. No wonder my friends of the underground variety avoid imprisonment as being com-

paratively a bed of roses. This is a pointer to the pass the Congress is coming to.

The friends who opposed the resolution on the British Cabinet Delegation's proposal do not seem to know what they are aiming at. Is independence to be bought at the price of a bloody revolution as was, say, the French, the Soviet or even the English ? Then frank and honest work has yet to begin. They have to tread a very dangerous path in openly making the Congress such an institution. My argument has no force if subterranean activity is a doctrine of universal application and is now being employed against the Congress. The very thought repels me. I should hope for the sake of my own sanity that the thought is devoid of any foundation. Then it is clearly their duty to say to the Congressmen that now that there is Congress Raj or Representative Raj, whether of the Congress variety or the Muslim League, they must set about reforming it in detail and not condemn it *in toto*. Total non-violent non-co-operation has no place in popular Raj, whatever its level may be.

Who is responsible for the mad orgy in Madura and, coming nearer, in Ahmedabad ? It will be folly to attribute everything evil to British machinations. This senseless theory will perpetuate foreign domination, not necessarily British. The British will go in any case. They want to go in an orderly manner as is evident to me from the State Paper, or they will go and leave India to her own fate assuming that India has forsaken the path of non-violence with the certain result of a combined intervention of an assortment of armed powers. Let the opposition say to Congressmen what kind of independence they want. Congressmen in general certainly do not know the kind of independence they want. They recite the formula almost parrot-like. Or, their notion of independence is fully expressed in saying that they mean by it Congress Raj. And they won't be wrong. They have left further thinking to the Working Committee — a most undemocratic way. In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform like charity must begin at home.

If then the Constituent Assembly fizzles out, it will not be because the British are wicked every time. It will be because

we are fools or, shall I say, even wicked? Whether we are fools or wicked or both, I am quite clear that we must look for danger from within, not fear the danger from without. The first corrodes the soul, the second polishes it.

Bombay, 9-7-'46
Harijan, 14-7-1946

68

SPEECH AT THE A.I.C.C.

The following is the text of Gandhiji's speech in the A.I.C.C. meeting held at Bombay on the 7th July.

I have often said that man plans but the success of his plans depends not on him but on the will of the Providence which is the supreme arbiter of our destinies. Unlike you, I am not in my own right but on sufferance. I have been told that some of my previous remarks about the Cabinet Mission's proposals have caused a good deal of confusion in the public mind. As a Satyagrahi it is always my endeavour to speak the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I never have a wish to hide anything from you. I hate mental reservations. But language is at best an imperfect medium of expression. No man can fully express in words what he feels or thinks. Even seers and prophets of old have suffered under that disability.

No Inconsistency

I have not seen what has appeared in the papers about what I am supposed to have said regarding the Cabinet Mission's proposals. I cannot read all the newspapers myself. I content myself with perusing only what my co-workers and assistants may place before me. I hold that I have lost nothing thereby. Because of what has appeared in the Press, an impression seems to have been created that I said one thing at Delhi and am saying something different now. I did say in one of my speeches at Delhi in regard to the Cabinet Mission's proposals that I saw darkness where I saw light before. That darkness has not yet lifted. If possible it has deepened. I could have asked the Working Committee to turn down the proposal about the Constituent Assembly if I could see my way clearly. You know

my relations with the members of the Working Committee. Babu Rajendra Prasad might have been a High Court Judge, but he chose instead to act as my interpreter and clerk in Champaran. Then there is the Sardar. He has earned the nickname of being my yes-man. He does not mind it. He even flaunts it as a compliment. He is a stormy petrel. Once he used to dress and dine in the Western style. But ever since he decided to cast his lot with me my word has been law to him. But even he cannot see eye to eye with me in this matter. They both tell me that whereas on all previous occasions I was able to support my instinct with reason and satisfy their head as well as heart, this time I have failed to do so. I told them in reply that whilst my own heart was filled with misgivings, I could not adduce any reason for it or else I would have asked them to reject the proposals straightway. It was my duty to place my misgivings before them to put them on their guard. But they should examine what I had said in the cold light of reason and accept my viewpoint only if they were convinced of its correctness. Their decision, which they have arrived at after prolonged deliberations and which is almost unanimous, is before you. The members of the Working Committee are your faithful and tried servants. You should not lightly reject their resolution.

Defeatist Logic

I am willing to admit that the proposed Constituent Assembly is not the Parliament of the people. It has many defects. But you are all seasoned and veteran fighters. A soldier is never afraid of danger. He revels in it. If there are shortcomings in the proposed Constituent Assembly, it is for you to get them removed. It should be a challenge to combat, not a ground for rejection. I am surprised that Shree Jaiprakash Narain said yesterday that it would be dangerous to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly and therefore they should reject the Working Committee's resolution. I was not prepared to hear such defeatist language from the lips of a tried fighter like Jaiprakash. One line from a song composed by the late Choudhary Rambhaj Dutt has always made a very deep appeal to me. It means: 'We will never be defeated — nay, not even in death.' That is the spirit in which I expect you to approach this resolution. A Satyagrahi knows no defeat.

Nor would I expect a Satyagrahi to say that whatever Englishmen do must be bad. The English are not necessarily bad. There are good men and bad men among the English people as among any other people. We ourselves are not free from defects. The English could not have risen to their present strength if they had not some good in them. They have come and exploited India, because we quarrelled amongst ourselves and allowed ourselves to be exploited. In God's world unmixed evil never prospers. God rules even where Satan seems to hold sway, because the latter exists only on His sufferance. Some people say that Satyagraha is of no avail against a person who has no moral sense. I join issue with that. The stoniest heart must melt if we are true and have enough patience. A Satyagrahi lays down his life, but never gives up. That is the meaning of the 'Do or Die' slogan. That slogan does not mean 'Kill or be killed'. That would be wilful distortion and a travesty of its true meaning. The true meaning is that we must do our duty and die in the course of performing it if necessary. To die without killing is the badge of a Satyagrahi. If we had lived up to that ideal we would have won Swaraj by now. But our *ahimsa* was lame. It walked on crutches. Even so it has brought us to our present strength. I know what happened in 1942. You will perhaps say that it was sabotage and underground activity that had brought the country to its present strength. It cannot be denied that sabotage activity was carried on in the name of the Congress during the '42 struggle, but I deny *in toto* that the strength of the masses is due to that. Whatever strength the masses have, is due entirely to *ahimsa* —however imperfect or defective its practice might have been. Our *ahimsa* was imperfect because we were imperfect, because it was presented to you by an imperfect being like myself. If then, even in the hands of imperfect instruments it could produce such brilliant results, what could it not achieve in the hands of a perfect Satyagrahi?

In 1942 our people showed great valour. But greater valour will be required of us before our goal is reached. We have done much, but more remains to be done. For that we must have patience and humility and detachment. You should try to understand what happened in 1942, the inner meaning of that struggle and the reason why it stopped short where it did.

No Bed of Roses

This is no time for dalliance or ease. I told Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that he must wear the crown of thorns for the sake of the nation and he has agreed. The Constituent Assembly is going to be no bed of roses for you but only a bed of thorns. You may not shirk it.

That does not mean that everybody should want to go into it. Only those should go there who are specially fitted for the task by virtue of their legal training or special talent. It is not a prize to be sought as a reward for sacrifices, but a duty to be faced even like mounting the gallows or sacrifice of one's all at the altar of service.

There is another reason why you should join the Constituent Assembly. If you asked me whether in the event of your rejecting the proposed Constituent Assembly or the Constituent Assembly failing to materialize, I would advise the people to launch civil disobedience, individual or mass, or undertake a fast myself, my reply is 'No'. I believe in walking alone. I came alone in this world, I have walked alone in the valley of the shadow of death and I shall quit alone when the time comes. I know I am quite capable of launching Satyagraha even if I am all alone. I have done so before. But this is no occasion for a fast or civil disobedience. I regard the Constituent Assembly as the substitute of Satyagraha. It is constructive Satyagraha.

Duty of a Satyagrahi

The alternative is constructive work which you have never done justice to. If you had, you would have today got the Constituent Assembly of Jaiprakash's dream instead of the present one. But a Satyagrahi cannot wait or delay action till perfect conditions are forthcoming. He will act with whatever material is at hand, purge it of dross and convert it into pure gold. Whatever may be the defects in the State Document of May 16th, I have no doubt as to the honesty of those who have framed it. They know they have got to quit. They want to quit in an orderly manner. And to that end they have produced the Document they could under the circumstances. I refuse to believe that they came all the way from England to deceive us.

A Polish lady has sent me a note just today saying that all Europeans had received secret instructions to leave India as the British army would no longer be able to give them adequate protection. If it is so, it is a sad reflection on us. We would be unworthy of the name of Satyagrahi if even an English child did not feel secure in our midst. Even if we succeed in driving out the Europeans by these tactics, something worse will take their place. Our Quit India resolution has no malice about it. It only means that we will no longer be exploited.

Let us not be cowardly, but approach our task with confidence and courage. Let not the fear of being deceived dismay us. No one can deceive a Satyagrahi. Never mind the darkness that fills my mind. He will turn it into light.

Harijan, 21-7-1946

69

INDEPENDENCE

Q. You have said in your article in the *Harijan* of July 15, under the caption 'The Real Danger', that Congressmen in general certainly do not know the kind of Independence they want. Would you kindly give them a broad but comprehensive picture of the Independent India of your own conception ?

A. I do not know that I have not, from time to time, given my idea of Indian Independence. Since however, this question is part of a series, it is better to answer it even at the risk of repetition.

Independence of India should mean independence of the whole of India, including what is called India of the States and the other foreign Powers, French and Portugese, who are there, I presume, by British sufferance. Independence must mean that of the people of India, not of those who are today ruling over them. The rulers should depend on the will of those who are under their heels. Thus, they have to be servants of the people, ready to do their will.

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. It

follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God, meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living Force which inheres in every other force known to the world and which depends on none, and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without belief in this all-embracing living Light.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be everwidening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is

equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.

Q. Do you believe that the proposed Constituent Assembly could be used for the realization of your picture ?

A. The Constituent Assembly has all the possibilities for the realization of my picture. Yet I cannot hope for much, not because the State Paper holds no such possibilities but because the document, being wholly of a voluntary nature, requires the common consent of the many parties to it. These have no common goal. Congressmen themselves are not of one mind even on the contents of Independence. I do not know how many swear by non-violence or the Charkha or, believing in decentralization, regard the village as the nucleus. I know on the contrary that many would have India become a first-class military power and wish for India to have a strong centre and build the whole structure round it. In the medley of these conflicts I know that if India is to be leader in clean action based on clean thought, God will confound the wisdom of these big men and will provide the villages with the power to express themselves as they should.

Q. If the Constituent Assembly fizzles out because of the "danger from within", as you have remarked in the above-mentioned article, would you advise the Congress to accept the alternative of a general country-wide strike and capture of power, either non-violently or with the use of necessary force ? What is your alternative in that eventuality if the above is not approved by you ?

A. I must not contemplate darkness before it stares me in the face. And in no case can I be party, irrespective of non-violence, to a universal strike and capture of power. Though, therefore, I do not know what I should do in the case of a breakdown, I know that the actuality will find me ready with an alternative. My sole reliance being on the living Power which we call God, He will put the alternative in my hand when the time has come, not a minute sooner.

Panchgani, 21-7-'46
Harijan, 28-7-1946

70

A TRAGIC PHENOMENON

My post contains so many letters from persons who want to be in the Constituent Assembly that it frightens me into the suspicion that, if these letters are an indication of the general feeling, the intelligentsia is more anxious about personal aggrandizement than about India's independence. And if I, though I have no connection with the applications of candidates for elections, receive so many letters, how many more must the members of the Working Committee be receiving? These correspondents should know that I take no interest in these elections, I do not attend meetings at which these applications are considered and that I often only know from newspapers who have been elected. It is on rare occasions that my advice is sought as to the choice to be made. But I write this more to draw attention to the disease of which these applications are a sign than to warn my correspondents against building any expectation of my intervention. It is wrong to think communally in such elections, it is wrong to think that anyone is good enough for the Constituent Assembly, it is altogether wrong to think that the election carries any honour with it, it is a post of service if one is fitted for the labours and, lastly, it is wrong to regard the post as one for making a few rupees while the Assembly lasts. The Constituent Assembly should have such members only who know something about constitutions all the world over, above all, about the constitution that India's genius demands. It is debas-

ing to think that true service consists in getting a seat in the Assembly. True service lies outside. The field of service outside is limitless. In the fight for Independence, the Assembly, like the one in course of formation, has a place. Nevertheless it is a very small place and that too if we use it wisely and well; certainly not, if there is a scramble for a seat in it. The scramble warrants the fear that it may become a hunting ground for place-seekers. I am free to confess that a Constituent Assembly is the logical outcome of parliamentary activity. The labours of the late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru opened my eyes to the fact that the parliamentary programme had a place in the national activity for Independence. I strove hard against it. It is certainly inconsistent with pure non-co-operation. But pure non-co-operation never held the field. What came into being also waned. Had there been universal non-co-operation of the non-violent type in the Congress ranks, there would have been no parliamentary programme. Non-violent non-co-operation with evil means co-operation with all that is good. Therefore, non-violent non-co-operation with a foreign government necessarily means an indigenous government based on non-violence. Had there been such complete non-co-operation, there would be Swaraj today based on non-violence. But this never happened. In the circumstances it would have been vain to struggle against what the nation had been familiar with and from which it could not be completely weaned. The parliamentary step having been taken, it would have been improper to boycott the present effort. But that does not, can never mean that there should be indecent competition for filling the seats in it. Let us recognize the limitations.

Panchgani, 18-7-'46
Harijan, 28-7-1946

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LOUIS FISCHER'S INTERVIEW

A Sovereign Body ?

Fischer opened with a broadside on the question of the Constituent Assembly. "I would go into the Constituent Assembly and use it for a different purpose — as a battlefield — and declare it to be a sovereign body. What do you say to this ?"

"It is no use declaring somebody else's creation a sovereign body," said Gandhiji. "After all, it is a British creation. A body does not become a sovereign body by merely asserting it. To become sovereign, you have to behave in a sovereign way. Three tailors of Tooley Street in Johannesburg declared that they were a sovereign body. It ended in nothing. It was just a farce.

"I do not consider the proposed Constituent Assembly to be non-revolutionary. I have said, and I mean it cent per cent, that the proposed Constituent Assembly is an effective substitute for civil disobedience of the constructive type. Whilst I have the greatest admiration for the self-denial and spirit of sacrifice of our Socialist friends, I have never concealed the sharp difference between their method and mine. They frankly believe in violence and all that is in its bosom. I believe in non-violence through and through."

Socialist with a Difference

That turned the discussion on to socialism. "You are a socialist and so are they," interpolated Fischer.

Gandhiji: "I am, they are not. I was a socialist before many of them were born. I carried conviction to a rabid socialist in Johannesburg, but that is neither here nor there. My claim will live when their socialism is dead."

"What do you mean by your socialism ?"

"My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is

material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body."

"Yes, but there are variations. My socialism in its modified form means that the State does not own everything. It does in Russia. There you certainly do not own your body even. You may be arrested at any time, though you may have committed no crime. They may send you wherever they like."

"Does not under your socialism, the State own your children and educate them in any way it likes?"

"All States do that. America does it."

"Then America is not very different from Russia."

"You really object to dictatorship."

"But socialism is dictatorship or else arm-chair philosophy. I call myself a communist also."

"O, don't. It is terrible for you to call yourself a communist. I want what you want, what Jaiprakash and the socialists want: a free world. But the communists don't. They want a system which enslaves the body and the mind."

"Would you say that of Marx?"

"The communists have corrupted the Marxist teaching to suit their purpose."

"What about Lenin?"

"Lenin started it. Stalin has since completed it. When the communists come to you, they want to get into the Congress and control the Congress and use it for their own ends."

"So do the socialists. My communism is not very different from socialism. It is a harmonious blending of the two. Communism, as I have understood it, is a natural corollary of socialism."

"Yes, you are right. There was a time when the two could not be distinguished. But today socialists are very different from communists."

"You mean to say, you do not want communism of Stalin's type."

"But the Indian communists want communism of the Stalin type in India and want to use your name for that purpose."

"They won't succeed."

Ethics of Reciprocity

After a little sword play Fischer changed over to another topic.

"Your young men are too Indo-centric," he said.

"That is only partly true. I won't say we have become international," replied Gandhiji, "but we have taken up forlorn causes, e.g., the cause of the exploited nations, because we are ourselves the chief exploited nation."

"The growing anti-White feeling here is bad," proceeded Gandhiji's interviewer. "In Taj Mahal Hotel they have put up a notice 'South Africans not admitted'. I do not like it. Your non-violence should make you more generous."

"That won't be non-violence. Today the White man rules in India. So, if Taj Mahal has the gumption to put up that notice, it is a feather in its cap."

Fischer's liberalism felt hurt. "That is what any nationalist will say. You must say something better," he remarked.

"Then I will be a nationalist for once," replied Gandhiji with firmness. "They have no right to be here if they do not deal with Indians on terms of equality."

"No right— yes," rejoined Fischer. "But you must give them more than their right. You must invite them."

"Yes, when I am the Viceroy."

"You mean the President of the Indian Republic."

"No. I will be quite content to be the Viceroy, a constitutional Viceroy, for the time being," said Gandhiji. "The first thing I will do, will be to vacate the Viceregal Lodge and give it to the Harijans. I will then invite the South African White visitors to my hut and say to them: 'You have ground my people to powder. But we won't copy you. We will give

you more than you deserve. We won't lynch you as you do in South Africa,' and thus shame them into doing the right."

"There is so much anti-White feeling today," put in Fischer somewhat troubled in mind.

"Of course, I am opposed to that. It can do no good to anybody."

"The world is so divided. And there might be another war and that may be between the Coloured and the White races."

"Europe seems to be heading for another war. It is not sufficiently exhausted."

"Europe is terribly exhausted. But with the atom bomb human beings don't matter so much. A few scientists are enough. The next war will be carried on by pressing a few buttons. That is why colour war is so dangerous."

"Anything is better than cowardice. It is violence double distilled." And to illustrate his remark Gandhiji narrated the story of a Negro clergyman with a Herculean frame in South Africa saying 'pardon me brother,' when insulted by a White man, and sneaking into a coloured man's compartment. "That is not non-violence. It is a travesty of Jesus' teaching. It would have been more manly to retaliate."

"You are not afraid of what happens to you but what it may mean to others," replied Fischer, analysing the illustration adduced by Gandhiji. "It takes a great deal of irresponsibility to give vent to your feelings and slap the White man under the circumstances described by you. In India the situation is different. The White men are not so numerous here."

"You are mistaken," replied Gandhiji. "Why, one Englishman is killed and a whole village is razed to the ground as a reprisal. What vindictiveness!"

A Testament of Faith

"You are strongly constitutionalist now. Is it for fear of the alternative — violence?" finally asked Fischer.

"No. If India is destined to go through a blood bath, it will do so. The thing I would fear is my own cowardice or dishonesty. I have neither. So I say, we must go in and work it

out. If they are dishonest, they will be found out. The loss will not be ours but theirs."

"I think you are afraid of the spirit of violence. It is widespread. I wonder whether it has not captured the mood of the youth and you are aware of it, and you fear that mood."

"It has not captured the imagination of the country. I admit that it has captured the imagination of a section of the youth."

"It is a mood that has got to be combated."

"Yes. I am doing it in my own way. It is my implicit faith that it is a survival which will kill itself in time. It cannot live. It is so contrary to the spirit of India. But what is the use of talking? I believe in an inscrutable Providence which presides over our destinies — call it God or by any other name you like. All I contend is that it is not the fear of violence that makes me advise the country to go to the Constituent Assembly. It is repugnant in a non-violent attitude not to accept an honourable substitute for civil revolt."

Panchgani, 27-7-'46
Harijan, 4-8-1946

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ALTERNATIVE TO INDUSTRIALISM

A correspondent writes:

> "Do you then believe that industrialization of India—to the extent of India producing her own ships, locomotives, aeroplanes, etc.—is necessary? If not, will you kindly suggest the alternative means by which India shall discharge her responsibilities as a free and independent nation?
>
> "If you believe in the establishment of such industries, who should, in your opinion, exercise control over the management and the profits that will accrue?"

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled

life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

There may be sensation in living dangerously. We must draw the distinction between living in the face of danger and living dangerously. A man who dares to live alone in a forest infested by wild beasts and wilder men without a gun and with God as his only Help, lives in the face of danger. A man who lives perpetually in mid-air and dives to the earth below to the admiration of a gaping world lives dangerously. One is a purposeful, the other a purposeless life.

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically in the face of a world, armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance, is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even though, only an individual or a group makes the effort.

At the same time I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate key industries, I would have State ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no *pariahs* of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men "for a' that".

And I avow this belief in the face of the inhumanities we have witnessed and may still have to witness in India as elsewhere. Let us live in the face of danger.

On the train to Delhi, 25-8-'46
Harijan, 1-9-1946

73

JEWS AND PALESTINE

Hitherto I have refrained practically from saying anything public regarding the Jew-Arab controversy. I have done so for good reasons. That does not mean any want of interest in the question, but it does mean that I do not consider myself sufficiently equipped with knowledge for the purpose. For the same reason I have tried to evade many world events. Without airing my views on them, I have enough irons in the fire. But four lines of a newspaper column have done the trick and evoked a letter from a friend who has sent me a cutting which I would have missed but for the friend drawing my attention to it. It is true that I did say some such thing in the course of a long conversation with Mr. Louis Fischer on the subject. I do believe that the Jews have been cruelly wronged by the world. "Ghetto" is, so far as I am aware, the name given to Jewish locations in many parts of Europe. But for their heartless persecution, probably no question of return to Palestine would ever have arisen. The world should have been their home, if only for the sake of their distinguished contribution to it.

But, in my opinion, they have erred grievously in seeking to impose themselves on Palestine with the aid of America and Britain and now with the aid of naked terrorism. Their citizenship of the world should have and would have made them honoured guests of any country. Their thrift, their varied talent, their great industry should have made them welcome anywhere. It is a blot on the Christian world that they have been singled out, owing to a wrong reading of the New Testament, for prejudice against them. "If an individual Jew does a wrong, the whole Jewish world is to blame for it." If an individual Jew like Einstein makes a great discovery or another composes unsurpassable music, the merit goes to the authors and not to the community to which they belong.

No wonder that my sympathy goes out to the Jews in their unenviably sad plight. But one would have thought, adversity would teach them lessons of peace. Why should they depend

upon American money or British arms for forcing themselves on an unwelcome land? Why should they resort to terrorism to make good their forcible landing in Palestine? If they were to adopt the matchless weapon of non-violence whose use their best prophets have taught and which Jesus the Jew who gladly wore the crown of thorns bequeathed to a groaning world, their case would be the world's, and I have no doubt that among the many things that the Jews have given to the world, this would be the best and the brightest. It is twice blessed. It will make them happy and rich in the true sense of the word and it will be a soothing balm to the aching world.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46

[Note: The following are the four lines referred to in the foregoing: "Gandhi also discussed the Palestine problem. 'The Jews have a good case', he affirmed. But he hoped the Arabs too would not be wronged."]

Harijan, 21-7-1946

74

CRIMINALS AND NON-VIOLENCE

Q. What would be the treatment meted out to criminals in Free India in the light of your non-violence?

A. In independent India of the non-violent type, there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease. Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.

New Delhi, 28-4-'46

Harijan, 5-5-1946

75

THIEVING

Q. What is the employer to do when an employee of his is addicted to stealing and is not amenable to correction whether it is by way of entreaty or the cane ?

A. It may well be that the others too are addicts though they may not be found out. Observation would show that we are all thieves, the difference being that most of us are tolerant towards ourselves and intolerant towards those that are found out and are not of the ordinary run. What is man, if he is not a thief, who openly charges as much as he can for the goods he sells ? If the reply be that the buyer is a willing dupe, it begs the question. In reality the buyer is helpless rather than willing. The stealing referred to is one of the symptoms of a deep-seated disease of society. It is symptomatic of the eternal strife between the moneyed few and the many paupers. Therefore, my advice to the employer will be to remove all temptations in the way of the thief, to treat him as if he was his own brother and, when he refuses to yield to any treatment, however humanitarian it may be, to ask him to go his way. Let the employer always ask himself whether he would treat his own brother in the same way at the given stage.

Panchgani, 14-7-'46
Harijan, 21-7-1946

76

NATURE CURE FOR CRIMINALS

Speaking after the evening prayer at Uruli, Gandhiji said that in his opinion, nature cure was an essential ingredient in the building of Swaraj of his conception. The attaining of true Swaraj presupposed the triple purification of body, mind and soul.

He could have hardly imagined when he uttered those words, that within twentyfour hours an occasion would arise to put that precept into practice. On the very next day a villager was brought to him with injuries on his body, received at the hands of thieves who had taken away ornaments etc. from his house. There were three ways, Gandhiji told the villagers of Uruli, of dealing with the case. The first was the stereotyped orthodox way of reporting to the police. Very often it only provided the police a further opportunity for corruption and brought no relief to the victim. The second way, which was followed by the general run of the village people, was to passively acquiesce in it. This was reprehensible as it was rooted in cowardice. Crime would flourish, while cowardice remained. What was more, by such acquiescence we ourselves became party to the crime. The third way, which Gandhiji commended, was that of pure Satyagraha. It required that we should regard even thieves and criminals as our brothers and sisters, and crime as a disease of which the latter were the victims and needed to be cured. Instead of bearing illwill towards a thief or a criminal and trying to get him punished they should try to get under his skin, understand the cause that had let him into crime and try to remedy it. They should, for instance, teach him a vocation and provide him with the means to make an honest living and thereby transform his life. They should realize that a thief or a criminal was not a different being from themselves. Indeed, if they turned the searchlight inward and closely looked into their own souls, they would find that the difference between them was only one of degree. The rich, moneyed man who made his riches by exploitation or other questionable means, was no

less guilty of robbery than the thief who picked a pocket or broke into a house and committed theft. Only the former took refuge behind the facade of respectability and escaped the penalty of law. Strictly speaking, remarked Gandhiji, all amassing or hoarding of wealth, above and beyond one's legitimate requirements was theft. There would be no occasion for thefts and therefore, no thieves, if there was a wise regulation of riches and absolute social justice prevailed. In the Swaraj of his conception, there would be no thieves and no criminals, or else it would be Swaraj only in name. The criminal was only an indication of the social malady and since nature cure, as he envisaged it, included the triple cure for body, mind and soul, they must not be satisfied with merely banishing physical illness from Uruli, their work must include the healing of the mind and soul too, so that there would be perfect social peace in their midst.

The Way of Satyagraha

If they followed the nature cure way of dealing with the criminal, which, as he had already explained, was the way of Satyagraha, they could not sit still in the face of crime. Only a perfect being could afford to lose himself within himself and withdraw completely from the cares and responsibilities of the world. But who could claim that perfection ? "On the high sea a sudden calm is always regarded by experienced pilots and mariners with concern. Absolute calm is not the law of the ocean. It is the same with the ocean of life. More often than not, it portends rough weather. A Satyagrahi would therefore neither retaliate nor would he submit to the criminal, but seek to cure him by curing himself. He will not try to ride two horses at a time, viz. to pretend to follow the law of Satyagraha, while at the same time, seeking police aid. He must foreswear the latter, in order to follow the former. If the criminal himself chooses to hand himself over to the police, it would be a different matter. You cannot expect to touch his heart and win his confidence, if at the same time you are prepared to go to the police and inform against him. That would be gross betrayal of trust. A reformer cannot afford to be an informer." And by way of illustration, he mentioned several instances of how he had refused to give information to the police, about persons who had

been guilty of violence and came and confessed to him. No police officer could compel a Satyagrahi to give evidence against a person who had confessed to him. A Satyagrahi would never be guilty of a betrayal of trust. He wanted the people of Uruli to adopt the method of Satyagraha, for dealing with crime and criminals. They should contact the criminals in their homes, win their confidence and trust by loving and selfless service, wean them from evil and unclean habits and help to rehabilitate them by teaching them honest ways of living.

Badlapur, 5-8-'46
Harijan, 11-8-1946

77

HONEST BUSINESS

Q. I am a young businessman of 21 years and have 11 dependents. I believe in truth and non-violence but find I cannot strictly follow it in business. What should I do ? Abandoning the business means suffering for my relations.

A. This begs the question. It is difficult but not impossible to conduct strictly honest business. The fact is that the honester a business the more successful it is. Hence the proverb coined by businessmen "Honesty is the best policy". What the correspondent lacks is application and an accurate knowledge of honest business methods. What is true is that honesty is incompatible with the amassing of a large fortune. "Verily, verily, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Nor therefore should an honest businessman, however capable he may be, support idlers whether eleven or more or fewer. The eleven dependents cannot all be infants or incapables. Honesty makes no impossible demands upon the resources of a businessman. An honest man cannot have dishonest kinsmen. The questioner will find on introspection that there is nothing wrong with honest business but that there is something wrong with him. Let him find out what it is that is wrong with him.

Panchgani, 18-7-'46
Harijan, 28-7-1946

78

A TRUE HINDU AND A TRUE MUSLIM

Referring to the riots in Ahmedabad Gandhiji said that the Hindus and Muslims in Ahmedabad had not yet got over their insanity. Islam meant peace, Hindus claimed to follow the path of *ahimsa*. They both swore by God but in practice they followed Satan. The Muslim stabbed the innocent Hindu and the Hindu stabbed the innocent Muslim. Of the three workers who were killed in Ahmedabad some days ago one was a Muslim. It was a Muslim's dagger that killed him. He was in the company of Hindus. No one even knew that he was a Muslim. One of his companions Vasantrao was well-known to and commanded the respect of both Hindus and Muslims. While in jail one of his Muslim companions went on a fast. There was an overwhelming majority of Hindus amongst the Satyagrahi prisoners. Vasantrao felt that he ought to give his moral support to the Muslim brother and went on a sympathetic fast. His senior companions in jail, tried to dissuade him. "Are you wiser than all of us? You know the Muslim friend's fast is not justified. If it was, we would all have fasted with him." His reply was: "I do not claim to be wise. I prefer to be a fool. I seek your blessings. If this Muslim friend dies in jail in the midst of all of us Hindus, with what face shall I return to my Muslim friends outside? Therefore, I would far rather die with him, whatever the issue of his fast." Neither died in the end, but Vasantrao proved by his action that he was a true Hindu and a true Muslim combined into one."

Gandhiji concluded by exhorting the audience to cultivate that mentality. He was sure that if they prayed to God to restore to sanity the Hindus and Muslims of Ahmedabad, their prayer would not go unheeded, but leap across space and melt the hearts of the deluded rioters in Ahmedabad.

Panchgani, 21-7-'46
Harijan, 28-7-1946

79

BUTCHERY IN AHMEDABAD

Butchery has been going on in Ahmedabad for several days. It is difficult to say who is at fault. The policy of the Government is not to let the public know as to who has knifed whom. The Congress Government has adhered to this policy. So we should believe that there is good reason behind this hush hush. It may be that this is on a par with a thief's mother feigning grief over her son's theft. In Ahmedabad everyone must know who is the aggressor or who is more at fault. My job is not to find that out. Mine is comparatively easier work.

The golden path is that one of the parties to the mutual slaughter should desist. Then alone can true peace be established and madness come to an end.

Is it not enough that three young men have laid down their lives in the attempt to put down the flames? I spoke about it at the prayer meeting at Poona. Several friends have written to me about the three martyrs. If we were wise, these sacrifices would have quenched the fire. But that has not happened. It does not mean that the sacrifices have gone in vain. It only means that many more are necessary to extinguish such flames.

The alternative is that both must exhaust themselves; they must face police bullets. Some may be sent to jail and some mount the gallows before peace is restored. This is the wrong way. Fire put out in this fashion is bound to flare up again. This process does not reduce the poison. It is simply suppressed. It spreads through the whole body and causes more mischief.

Peace restored with the help of the police and its elder brother the military will strengthen the hold of the foreign Government and emasculate us still further. Poet Iqbal has written the immortal line :

मज़हब नहीं सिखाता आपसमें बैर रखना।

"Religion does not inculcate mutual strife." Could there be a greater proof of our cowardice than fighting amongst ourselves?

There is a method about everything—even mutual fight. If we must fight, why should we seek the help of the police and the military? The Government should clearly say that the military, whilst it is in India, will only be used for maintaining cleanliness, cultivating unused land and the like. The police will be used to catch *bona fide* thieves. Neither will be used to put down communal riots.

Let Ahmedabad folk be brave enough to eschew the help of the police and the military, let them not be cowards. Rioters are mostly hooligans who do their nefarious deeds in the dark. I am told that most of the stabbings have been in the back. Seldom or never have they been in the chest. Why should one be frightened of such people? One should rather brave death at their hands in the hope that the sacrifice will bring them to sanity. If one has not the requisite courage to face death, one must defend oneself by putting up a fight. The question may be asked as to how one should fight against those who stab you unawares from behind. It may not be possible to prevent such stabbing, but if the onlookers are not in collusion with the evildoers and are not devoid of courage, they will catch hold of the culprit and hand him over to the police or to the community to which he belongs. Or they can bring him before the people's *panchayat*. Only they may not take the law into their own hands.

Panchgani, 22-7-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 28-7-1946

80

COMPENSATION FOR MURDER

I have been asked whether the brother or other near relatives of the late Bhai Rajabali should demand compensation in money from Government for his murder. The deceased himself would not have counted such a death as loss. As a matter of fact, it is murders such as this which, if wholly unavenged, will ultimately put an end to murder. The moment any compensation or revenge is sought, the good of the willing sacrifice is wiped out. And how then could the spirit of the deceased rest in peace ?

Murder can never be avenged by either murder or taking compensation. The only way to avenge murder is to offer oneself as a willing sacrifice, with no desire for retaliation. Those who believe in this premise will never dream of demanding or taking any compensation for the loss of their dear ones. The principle of taking of life for life will, on the contrary, only lead to an increase of murders. This is apparent to all today. Revenge or compensation may furnish some satisfaction to the individual, but I am quite definite that it can never restore peace to or uplift society.

The question arises as to what the individual should do in a society where revenge is the rule. The answer lies not in precept but in example. And those alone can set the example who have been wronged. Therefore, the final decision must rest with Bhai Rajabali's relatives. My duty lay in pointing them the way of *ahimsa* as I know it.

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

Sevagram, 9-8-'46
Harijan, 18-8-1946

81

HEAL THYSELF

A correspondent has written to me about the butchery that is going on in Ahmedabad. I give below the relevant portions from his letter.

> "I wish to write to you about the means to be employed for putting down riots. About two months ago you wrote an article on Ahimsak Seva Dal — non-violent volunteer corps. But looking at the situation in the country, the suggestion will not do. Just as you have taught us how to fight against the British Government non-violently, you should go to some place of riot and show us the way of quelling riots in a non-violent manner by personal example. Supposing you were in Ahmedabad today and went out to quell the riots, any number of volunteers will join you. Two of our Congress workers Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali went out in such a quest and fell a prey to the *goonda's* knife. They laid down their lives in the pursuit of an ideal and they deserve all praise. But no one else had the courage to follow in their footsteps. They have not the same self-confidence. If they had it, there would be no riots and, even if riots broke out, they would never assume the proportion and the form that the present day riots do. But the fact remains that such a state is merely an imaginary thing today.
>
> "Your guidance and example can inspire many like me with courage and self-confidence. Once you have shown the way, the local workers will be able to follow it whenever occasion demands it. I feel that unless you set an example in action, your writings and utterances will not be of any use to the ordinary people, and even Congressmen, in organizing non-violent protection of society."

I like the suggestion mentioned above. People followed my advice and took to non-violent resistance against the British Government, because they wanted to offer some sort of resistance. But their non-violence, I must confess, was born of their helplessness. Therefore, it was the weapon of the weak. That is why, today we worship Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Azad Hind Fauj (I.N.A.). We forget that Netaji himself had told his soldiers that on going to India, they must follow the way of non-violence. This I have from the leaders of the I.N.A. But we have lost all sense of discrimination. To restore it, the

I.N.A. men will have to live up to the ideal placed before them by Netaji. The work of those who believe in non-violence is very difficult in this atmosphere which is full of violence. But the path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence. We have not been able to give proof of such non-violence. We might look upon the action of Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali as examples of the non-violence of the brave. But when communal feelings run high, we are unable to demonstrate any effect of the sacrifices mentioned above. For that, many like Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi will have to lay down their lives. The fact that no one else in Ahmedabad has followed the example set by Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali shows that we have not yet developed the spirit of sacrifice to the extent of laying down our lives in non-violent action. The correspondent has rightly said that under these circumstances, I should act myself whether others join me or not. It will be disgraceful on my part to sit at home and tell others to go and lay down their lives. Such a thing cannot be an indication of non-violence. I have never had the chance to test my non-violence in the face of communal riots. It might be argued that it was my cowardice which prevented me from seeking such a chance. Be that as it may, God willing, the chance will still come to me, and by throwing me in the fire, He will purify me and make the path of non-violence clear. No one should take it to mean that sacrifice of my life will arrest all violence. Several lives like mine, will have to be given if the terrible violence that has spread all over, is to stop and non-violence reign supreme in its place. The poet has sung:

"हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो, नहीं कायरनुं काम, जोने ।"

"The path of Truth is for the brave, never for the coward." The path of Truth is the path of non-violence.

Panchgani, 26-6-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 4-8-1946

82

TWO QUESTIONS

Q. The Congress has been fighting the British Government non-violently. When Congressmen come into power, they shoot their own brothers who have gone astray and are causing trouble. Is it right? If the Congressmen in power have not the courage to lay down their lives, while attempting to put down the riots non-violently, does it not show that with the exception of a few individuals like Ravishankar Maharaj and Sane Guruji, the non-violence of Congressmen in general is the non-violence of the weak?

A. The question of violence and non-violence raised by you is an old question. I have said a lot in this connection. If like many others, non-violence does not appeal to your heart, you should discard it. I shall not find fault with you for that, and, if others do, you should not care. The principle is this: "That which has been propounded by the *rishis*, practised by the sages and appeals to one's heart should be followed and put into practice." The question might arise as to what one is to do, when the thing that appeals to one's heart is contrary to what has been propounded by the *rishis* and practised by the sages. The answer is, that in such a case the individual can follow his bent at his own risk. Many reforms and new discoveries have been made in this way. Our Shankaracharyas have supported the institution of untouchability but both our head and heart consider it a blot on Hinduism. We do not care, if others consider our belief to be wrong.

Q. From 1920 you have described the British Government's officials as the arms of Ravana. Congress Governments use these arms. Again, the laws made by the British Government say that it is an offence to beat a prisoner arrested on suspicion or for an alleged offence, in order to extort a confession or to frighten him. During the 1942 revolution, many like me were severely beaten after arrest. Should not the Congress Governments hold an inquiry into the police excesses thus committed?

A. I have severely criticized the British Government and do so still. But that does not mean that all police officials under the British Government must necessarily be the devil's disciples even when they come under Congress Governments. No one has questioned Congress Governments' right to inquire into the police excesses in 1942 or even before. But such rights are not always exercised. We all know that there are times when wisdom lies in not exercising certain rights. The Congress has in general followed the policy of not inquiring into the kind of excesses mentioned by you. You should know that often such offences are difficult to prove. I believe the right of inquiry has been exercised in cases where the offence was beyond doubt. But my advice is, let us not sit in judgment on the Congress Ministries. The belief that the Congress has acted wisely in accepting power should suffice.

Panchgani, 25-7-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)
Harijan, 4-8-1946

83

CONGRESS MINISTERS AND NON-VIOLENCE

Shri Shankarrao Dev writes:

"Many people do not understand why those who call themselves Satyagrahis, resort to the use of the military and the police, the moment they become Ministers of Governments. The people feel that this is a breach of both the creed and the policy of *ahimsa*. This popular belief seems to be consistent with reason. The inconsistency between belief and action of the Congress Ministers and the exploitation of the same by their opponents, both Congress and non-Congress, makes it hard for our workers to stand up to the criticism.

"Generally speaking, Congress *ahimsa* has been the *ahimsa* of the weak. It was bound to be so in the present development of the country and this fact is well known to you. You claim that there is a special fire in the *ahimsa* of the strong. At the same time you accepted leadership of the weak, in order to make them strong through the use of *ahimsa*. And, in spite of their weakness, governmental power has today come into their hands. It is impossible for them today to put down

disturbances without the use of the police and the military, and if they tried to do so, they would not only not succeed, but they would not get the co-operation of the people either.

"I did once ask you, whether a Satyagrahi should take high office if it came his way and if he did, how should he promote non-violence? I hold that the person who has made non-violence his creed, should not take office and he will never be happy there. But there can be no such difficulty for those who have accepted *ahimsa* only as a policy. Many Congressmen have accepted office and you have permitted them to do so. The question arises as to whether you can expect those who believe in *ahimsa*, to act up to it, at least in their personal capacity, during disturbances. Further, having acquired strength through non-violence, how should it be used, in order to bring in a State, where there is need for the least government? If you cannot lighten our path towards the desired goal, Satyagraha will not be considered a full-fledged weapon."

From my point of view the answer is easy. I have been saying for some time, that the words "truth and non-violence" should be removed from the Congress constitution. But whether they are actually removed or not, let us assume that they are and then we shall be able to come to an independent judgment on the rightness or wrongness of any action. I am convinced that so long as we have to rely on the use of the military and even the police for preserving internal order, we shall continue to remain the slaves of either Britain or some other foreign power. It matters little then, whether the Government is in the hands of Congress- or non-Congressmen. Let us assume that Congress Ministers are not pledged to non-violence. Let us further assume that Hindus, Mussalmans and others want military and police protection. If they do, they will continue to receive it. Those Ministers who are wedded to non-violence, must resign, since they would object to the use of the military and the police. The significance of it all is that so long as our people have not the wisdom to come to a mutual understanding, so long will *goondaism* continue and we shall not be able to generate the true strength of *ahimsa* within us.

Now as to how this non-violent strength can be created. I gave the answer to this question in the *Harijan* of August 4th, in replying to a letter from Ahmedabad. So long as we have not cultivated the strength to die with courage and love in our hearts, we cannot hope to develop the *ahimsa* of the strong.

There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think, we need worry ourselves about this at the moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breadth but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.

It must be remembered that nowhere in the world, does a State without government exist. If at all it could ever come into being, it would be in India; for, ours is the only country where the attempt has, at any rate, been made. We have not yet been able to show that bravery to the degree which is necessary and for the attainment of which there is only one way. Those who have faith in the latter, have to demonstrate it. In order to do so, the fear of death has to be completely shed, just as we have shed the fear of prisons.

New Delhi, 6-9-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)
Harijan, 15-9-1946

84

DO NOT ELIMINATE TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

A correspondent who sends his name and describes himself as devoted to service writes :

"I read your *Harijanbandhu* reguarly. Recently in your reply to Shri Shankarrao Dev you have said : 'I have been saying for some time that the words "truth and non-violence" should be removed from the Congress constitution.'

"If this happens in the existing circumstances, people will lose their faith in Congress because they will feel that so long as it was not in power it was thought best to adhere to truth and non-violence, but now that power has come it contemplates removing these words from the constitution. They might even infer that the removal is being resorted to in order to counter the Muslim League's threat of direct action.

"If these words are eliminated from the constitution, Congress will fall from the high pedestal which these means

alone have secured for it. It will lose in prestige. You have always said that you yourself cannot go forward one step without truth and non-violence, and is it not their adherence to these that makes the public think of Congressmen as trustworthy, merciful, full of the spirit of service and bravery? The tree must perish if its roots are destroyed. You must see to it that the roots go deeper and deeper and are not eradicated.

"Therefore, I feel that you should compel every Congressman to follow these principles and if he refuses, he must leave the Congress."

How can I, the champion of *ahimsa*, compel anyone to perform even a good act? Has not a well-known Englishman said that to make mistakes as a free man is better than being in bondage in order to avoid them? I believe in the truth of this. The reason is obvious. The mind of a man who remains good under compulsion cannot improve, in fact it worsens. And when compulsion is removed all the defects well up to the surface with even greater force.

Moreover, no one should be a dictator. Even the Congress cannot force its members to follow truth and non-violence. These have to be accepted willingly from the heart.

I have been recommending the elimination of these words from the constitution for over a year, long before the Muslim League contemplated direct action which makes no bones about *himsa* or *ahimsa*. Thus my recommendation has no connection with the League's resolution. But I have no help for those who invariably attribute sinister motives to my words.

I have strong grounds for my recommendation. Congress may not cover untruth and violence under the guise of truth and non-violence. Is not this an all-sufficing reason? If Congressmen were no hypocrites, nothing could be better than that Congress should adhere to these two pillars.

I could never wish the Congress, the moment it comes into power, to discard the very ladder by which it has climbed so high. I believe that if Congressmen, while in power, renounce truth and non-violence, the lustre surrounding the Congress will grow dim.

We must all guard against one mistake. There is no rule against following what is not in the constitution. Indeed my hope is that when these words are removed all, or a large majo-

rity of Congressmen will heartily follow truth and non-violence even to the point of death.

The writer has forgotten to mention one thing which I should like to clarify. The words in the constitution are 'peaceful and legitimate'. I have no right to interpret them as truthful and non-violent, if they don't bear that meaning. Congress has adopted them as a policy, not as a creed. The question of my right to retain or eliminate them does not arise. But whilst it lasts, policy is tantamount to creed and hence becomes obligatory. Of course, my recommendation has no meaning if 'peaceful' can be interpreted as violent and 'legitimate' as untruthful.

New Delhi, 21-9-'46 (*From the original in Gujarati*)
Harijan, 29-9-1946

85

EXCESSIVE PRAISE

Thus writes an army officer to a friend :

"... And what a pity it is that, in all democratic countries, politicians are so ignorant of and uninterested in the army. The army could teach them much. Is it not at least worthy of deep thought as to why it is, that the army has held the loyalty and affection of the man serving in it to a far greater degree than any other Government service? And held it moreover under conditions of danger and discomfort and trial far exceeding those of any other service. You have a fine army and it will be finer still when your best men come forth in large numbers to officer it. Find the right officers and you need have no fears about it. It will be second to none. But put in the wrong officers or get it mixed up with politics and you will have a heavy bill to pay. India is bound to have many troubled years ahead, but I am convinced that the one thing which can pull you through them most quickly and with the minimum bloodshed is your present army, provided you find officers for it and keep politics and religious differences out of it."

It is not a matter for pity if it is true that in all democratic countries politicians are uninterested in the army. The pity of it is that they are wrongly interested in it. The democracies

regard army men as their saviours. They bring wealth and subjugate other countries and sustain authority in times of civil disturbance. What is, therefore, to be wished is that democracy to be true, should cease to rely upon the army for anything whatsoever.

What has the army done for India ? It is for that army that the writer pleads. I fear that in no sense has it served India's interests. It has kept millions of inoffensive and disarmed people under subjection. It has impoverished them. It is an army of which the sooner the British part is sent away and better employed, the better for both India and England, and the world. The sooner the Indian part is turned away from its destructive purpose and its talent employed for constructive purposes, the better it will be for democracy in India. It will be a poor democracy that depends for its existence on military assistance. Military force interferes with the free growth of the mind. It smothers the soul of man. Thanks to years of foreign domination brought about by the "highly efficient" army, India, in spite of the efforts of the Mission, might have to pull through a long or short civil war which, I shall hope, will bring to an end all infatuation for armed forces. They are a brutalizing process after you have isolated discipline which should be common for any social order. If Free India has to sustain the present military expenditure, it will bring no relief to the famishing millions.

Mussoorie, 30-5-'46
Harijan, 9-6-1946

86

HOW TO RESIST INVASION

The following question was asked by a British Military Officer who read with great interest the article in the *Harijan* of July 28, 1946, on 'Independence'. The Officer is a military engineer, widely travelled in America and Europe, and has seen with his own eyes the horrors of the war in Germany.

Q. In this ideal State (there is no doubt that it is ideal) how can one be sure that outside aggression can be avoided? If the State has no modern army with modern weapons which are the product of the machine age, an invading army with modern weapons could overrun the country and subject the inhabitants to slavery.

A. The questioner, who claims to have read and re-read my article carefully and says he has liked it and is a military man, has evidently missed the central point of my article, viz. that however small a nation or even a group may be, it is able, even as the individual, provided that it has one mind as also the will and the grit, to defend its honour and self-respect against a whole world in arms. Therein consists the matchless strength and beauty of the unarmed. That is non-violent defence which neither knows nor accepts defeat at any stage. Therefore, a nation or a group which has made non-violence its final policy, cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb.

Sevagram, 8-8-'46
Harijan, 18-8-1946

87

WHY ARMIES ?

Two Indonesian friends, who dropped in to see Gandhiji, asked how it was possible for them to resist European aggression except by aggression. Europe had always believed in force and the Indonesian friends did not see how any country could meet it except by force.

Gandhiji gently remonstrated by saying that such a question betrayed complete ignorance of non-violence. "Let me put you a counter-question," he said. "Supposing the armed and combined might of Britain, America and Russia wished to enslave you, what amount of violence would you need to counter it ? I suggest that you could not violently stand up to it unless, perhaps, you had the backing of the whole of Asia and even then you might lose if the European weapons of war were better. But you could resist them alone with non-violence. You might be annihilated to a man but no one could conquer you." Gandhiji went on to tell them what he has been saying on more than one occasion recently that the Indian struggle for independence had been mere passive resistance which is a weapon of the weak and often a stepping stone to active armed resistance. If the Congress had really adopted non-violence, the present communal strife just could not have come into being. The bravery of the heart was far greater than the bravery of the body. A non-violent Indonesia could lead the East, a position Gandhiji would have liked India to hold. But today a mighty flood of violence was sweeping over India which they had not, to their hurt, learnt how to resist non-violently. "Unless," he ended, "we cultivate this strength, India will not fulfil the high hopes I have cherished for her in my heart all these many many years."

New Delhi, 10-7-'47
Harijan, 20-7-1947

88

OUTSIDE HIS FIELD

Major General Cariappa is reported to have said as follows:

> "Non-violence is of no use under the present circumstances in India and only a strong army can make India one of the greatest nations in the world."

I fear, like many experts, General Cariappa has gone beyond his depth and has been unwittingly betrayed into a serious misconception of *ahimsa*, of whose working in the nature of things, he can only have very superficial knowledge. By reason of lifelong practice of *ahimsa*, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of *ahimsa* in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the atom bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks of violence put together. It would have become the General, unaided as he can only now be, by his British teachers of military science and practice, not to have gone out of his depth. Generals greater than General Cariappa have been wise and humble enough frankly to make the admission that they can have no right to speak of the possibilities of the force of *ahimsa*. We are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice in its own home. Should a bankrupt, who has been by the gamble in the share market, sing the praise of that particular form of gambling?

New Delhi, 7-11-'47
Harijan, 16-11-1947

89

WHAT CAN VIOLENCE DO ?

If newspaper reports are to be believed, responsible Ministers in Sindh and other equally responsible Leaguers almost all over, are preaching violence in naked language. Nakedness is itself a virtue as distinguished from hypocrisy. But when it is a hymn of obscenity, it is a vice to be shunned, whether it resides in a Leaguer or any other person. Any Muslim who is not in the League is a traitor, says one. The Hindu is a *kafir* deserving the fate of such, says another.

Calcutta has given an ocular demonstration of what direct action is and how it is to be done.

Who is the gainer ? Certainly not the Muslim masses nor the sober follower of Islam which itself means sobriety and peace. The very salute '*salam alaikum*' means 'peace be unto you.'

Violence may have its place in life but not that which we have witnessed in Calcutta, assuming of course, that newspaper accounts are to be trusted. Pakistan of whatever hue does not lie through senseless violence. When I write of senseless violence, I naturally assume the possibility of sensible violence, whatever the latter may be. The Calcutta demonstration was not an illustration of sensible violence.

What senseless violence does is to prolong the lease of the life of British or foreign rule. I believe that the authors of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission desire peaceful transfer of power to representative Indian hands. But if *we* need the use of the British gun and bayonet, the British will not go or, if they do, some other foreign power will take their place. We will make a serious mistake, if, everytime the British bayonet is used, we trot out the *agent provocateur*. No doubt he has been at work. Let us not ride that horse to death.

Calcutta has earned a bad repute of late. It has seen too many wild demonstrations during the past few months. If the evil reputation is sustained for some time longer, it will cease to be the City of Palaces, it will become the city of the dead.

Would that the violence of Calcutta were sterilized and did not become a signal for its spread all over. It depends upon the leaders of the Muslim League of course, but the rest will not be free from responsibility. They can retaliate or refrain. Refraining is easy and simple, if there is the will. Retaliation is complicated. Will it be tooth against tooth or many against one ?

Sevagram, 19-8-'46
Harijan, 25-8-1946

90

ANTIDOTE

After giving a graphic description of the recent unfortunate and disgraceful happenings in Calcutta, a writer asks : "What is our duty in such circumstances ? The Congress gives no clear instructions to the rank and file in such crises. Sermons on non-violence from afar are of little use. To have offered non-violent resistance would have meant allowing all property to be destroyed and every Hindu to be killed."

The Congress Working Committee has given the clearest possible lead in the last sentence of its resolution published in the newspapers. Fratricide will not abate by "intimidation and violence but by mutual understanding, friendly discussion and, if necessary, by agreed arbitration." One does not need to believe in non-violence as a creed to perceive the truth of this practical proposition. If through deliberate courage the Hindus had died to a man, that would have been deliverance of Hinduism and India and purification of Islam in this land.

As it was, the third party had to intervene in order to still mutual savagery. Neither the Muslims nor the Hindus concerned have gained by the intervention. Supposing that the Calcutta virus extends to the whole of India and British gunpowder keeps the two from stabbing one another, the British power or its substitute will be in possession of India for a long time to come. The length will be measured by the period required by the parties coming to sanity. It will come either by an exhausting mutual fight, independent of the foreign element or by one party eschewing violence in spite of heaviest odds. Successful

mutual strife is obviously impossible in the present state of general ignorance of the use of modern weapons and their inaccessibility. Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge. This is no sermon on *ahimsa* but cold reason and the statement of a universal law. Given the unquenchable faith in the law, no provocation should prove too great for the exercise of forbearance. This I have described as non-violence of the brave.

Unfortunately for us, we are strangers to the non-violence of the brave on a mass scale. Some even doubt the possibility of the exercise of non-violence by groups, much less by masses of people. They restrict its exercise to exceptional individuals. Only, mankind can have no use for it if it is always reserved only for individuals.

Be that as it may, this much is clear that if the people are probably not ready for the exercise of non-violence of the brave, they must be ready for the use of force in self-defence. There should be no camouflage. Self-defence must be pure and simple. Then too it must never be cowardly or crude. It must, therefore, never be secret. Such is stabbing in the back and evading detection. I am conscious of the fact that we are a people unarmed and untrained in the use of arms. Opinions will differ as to whether it is good that we are in that position. There can be no denying the fact that no one needs training in the use of arms in self-defence. What is wanted for the purpose is strong arms and stronger will.

Doing injury to another is obviously violence but harbouring injury to another and yet unwillingness from cowardice to defend oneself or one's neighbour is also violence and probably worse than the first.

What then are the leaders to do? What are the new Ministers to do? They must ever seek to attain communal harmony — never under threats, ever for its own sake. I regard a Muslim or any Non-Hindu as my blood brother, not in order to please him but because he is born of the same mother Hind as I am. He does not cease to be my brother because he may hate or disown me. I must woo him even, it may be, in spite of himself. The new Ministers must resolve never to use British troops, no matter what their hue is, not even the police trained by them.

They are not our enemies. But they have been hitherto used not to help the people but to keep them under the foreign yoke. They should now, as they can, be used for constructive purposes. The military are specially qualified for such work. They are trained and expected to bring into being canvas cities in a moment. They know what it is to procure and keep clean water and make perfect sanitary arrangements. No doubt, they know how to kill and be killed in the act. The public know this part of their work only too well. But it is by no means the most substantial part of their work. It is the background which should be prized, advertised and followed. The animal part of it is unhuman, the other part is essentially human and clean. Let us copy it and humanize the troops if we can. The attempt is worth making. It can only be made by those who are not deceived by the glamour that hangs round them and the awe they inspire. This is possible only when we have the courage to face death without revenge or retaliation in mind or deed.

New Delhi, 2-9-'46
Harijan, 8-9-1946

91

WHAT TO DO ?

A friend sends the following questions :

Q. 1. You have all along held and expressed the view that persons should observe strict non-violence even when attacked by hooligans or others. Does this hold good when women are attacked or outraged ? If people are unable to follow your lead regarding non-violence, would you advise them to die as cowards or resist aggression with violence ?

Q. 2. Should you not unequivocally condemn the dual role that the Muslim League is playing today ? While, on the one hand, its leaders are openly preaching violence and *jehad* against Hindus, the same men continue, on the other hand, to hold office as Ministers, having a controlling hand on all the threads of administration, including police and justice.

Q. 3. Is there no constituted authority in India which can put a stop to this grave anomaly which is unprecedented in history ?

Q. 4. Do you realize that if the present happenings are allowed to continue, civil war will become inevitable? How would you advise your countrymen to face such a catastrophe, if it comes?

A. 1. In a society of my imagination, outrage posited by the questioner cannot take place. But in the society in the midst of which we are living, such outrages do take place. My answer is unequivocal. A non-violent man or woman will and should die without retaliation, anger or malice, in self-defence or in defending the honour of his women folk. This is the highest form of bravery.

If an individual or a group of people are unable or unwilling to follow this great law of life, which is miscalled my lead, retaliation or resistance unto death is the second best, though a long way off from the first. Cowardice is impotence worse than violence. The coward desires revenge but being afraid to die, he looks to others, may be the Government of the day, to do the work of defence for him. A coward is less than man. He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women. Lastly, let me add that if women had followed or would now follow my advice, every woman would protect herself without caring or waiting for aid from her brother or sister.

A. 2. Of course, the dual role adverted to is unequivocally bad. It is a sad chapter in our national life. My condemnation is of universal application. Fortunately it is so bad that it cannot last long.

A. 3. The only constituted authority is the British. We are all puppets in their hands. But it would be wrong and foolish to blame that authority. It acts according to its nature. That authority does not compel us to be puppets. We voluntarily run into their camp. It is, therefore, open to any and every one of us to refuse to play the British game.

Let us also admit frankly that the British authority is struggling to quit India. It does not know how. It honestly wants to leave India but wants before leaving, to undo the wrong it has been doing for so long. Being in the position of 'the toad under the harrow', I must know where it hurts. I have been telling the authority, if it will undo the wrong quickly, to leave India to her fate. But those who compose the British service cannot realize this obvious fact. They flatter themselves with

the belief that they know India better than we do ourselves. Having successfully kept us under subjection for over a century, they claim the right to constitute themselves judges of our destiny. We may not grumble, if we are to come into our own through the way of peace. Satyagraha is never vindictive. It believes not in destruction but in conversion. Its failures are due to the weaknesses of the Satyagrahi, not to any defect in the law itself. The British authority having decided to quit, (whatever the reason), will show growing defects and weaknesses. Parties will find that it is more and more a broken reed. And, when parties quarrel as Hindus and Muslims do, let one or the other or both realize that, if India is to be an independent nation, one or both must deliberately cease to look to British authority for protection.

A. 4. This brings me to the last question. We are not yet in the midst of civil war. But we are nearing it. At present we are playing at it. War is a respectable term for *goondaism* practised on a mass or national scale. If the British are wise, they will keep clear of it. Appearances are to the contrary. Even the English members in the provincial Assemblies refuse to see that they were given seats by the Act of 1935, not because it was right but in order that they might protect British interests and keep Hindus and Muslims apart. But they do not see this. It is a small matter. Nevertheless it is a straw showing the way the wind is blowing. Lovers and makers of Swaraj must not be dismayed by these omens. My advice is Satyagraha first and Satyagraha last. There is no other or better road to freedom. Whoever wants to drink the ozone of freedom must steel himself against seeking military or police aid. He or they must ever rely upon their own strong arms or what is infinitely better, their strong mind and will which are independent of arms, their own or others'.

New Delhi, 9-9-'46
Harijan, 15-9-1946

92

IS IT NOT COWARDICE ?

Q. Non-violence in your opinion is not cowardice, but it is a form of resistance to injustice. You have admitted that it is wrong to arrest and imprison innocent persons which civil resisters are. And you have cheerfully courted arrest and imprisonment. Is this not inconsistent and cowardly ?

A. Evidently you do not know the working of non-violence. An unjust law is itself a species of violence. Arrest for its breach is more so. Now the law of non-violence says that violence should be resisted not by counter-violence but by non-violence. Any breach of a law carries with it a penalty. It does not become unjust, merely because I say so. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it is unjust. The State has the right to enforce it, whilst it is on the statute book. I must resist it non-violently. This I do, by breaking the law and by peacefully submitting to arrest and imprisonment. I call such behaviour an act of bravery to the extent required. That imprisonment for a man like me today carries no suffering with it is irrelevant, if it may be assumed that ordinary prison-treatment would make no difference in my mental condition. Thus non-resistance in the case under discussion, is an essential condition of non-violence, not a symptom of cowardice. Resistance in the shape of refusing to be arrested etc. on the other hand, will in this case be certainly blustering, thoughtless violence and might be classified as cowardly brag.

New Delhi, 14-9-'46
Harijan, 22-9-1946

93

WHAT CAN AHIMSA DO ?

Q. Wherever in the world today one casts one's eye, there is nothing but violence and power politics to be seen. And this obtains even in democratic countries like England and America. Have you pondered as to what your *ahimsa* can do under such circumstances ?

A. It is true that power politics exist everywhere ; but you are very much mistaken if you imagine that true democracy obtains either in America or England. The voice of the people may be said to be God's voice, the voice of the *Panchayat.* But how can there be the voice of God where the people themselves are the exploiters as England and America are ? They live on the coloured races by exploiting them. If the voice of the people is the voice of God, they will be above party. His scales will ever be evenly weighted with truth and non-violence. This statement embraces my reply. My *ahimsa* is neither maimed nor weak. It is all-powerful. Where there is *ahimsa*, there is Truth and Truth is God. How He manifests Himself, I cannot say. All I know is that He is all-pervading and where He is, all is well. There is, therefore, one law for all. Wherever in the world Truth and Non-violence reign supreme, there is peace and bliss. That these exist nowhere shows that they are hidden from man for the time being. But they cannot disappear for ever. That faith must sustain the faithful.

Harijan, 29-9-1946 *(From the original in Gujarati)*

94

THOU TOO BIHAR !

It is a grim irony of fate that Bihar, which did so well during the golden days of Satyagraha, should now disgrace itself by criminal lawlessness. If the news published is authentic, chain-pulling and stopping trains without cause has become a common occurrence in Bihar with the result that the trains rarely run to time. Passengers consider it superfluous to buy tickets for train journeys. Under a national government, they argue, payment should be unnecessary. *Jai Hind* is regarded as a cry for loot and murder.

I do not know what truth there is in these charges which are as wild as they well can be. I know some parts of Bihar where persons do not distinguish between things lawful and unlawful. I have even heard the argument that I am largely responsible for the prevailing lawlessness, not only in Bihar, but throughout India. I need hardly say that it is a thoughtless charge. The lawlessness, if it can be so described, that I have advocated is like prescribing wholesome and necessary food for the body. Behind my 'lawlessness' there is discipline, construction and well-being of society. It is an effective protest against unjust and injurious law or act. It can never take the form of selfish evasion of a duty. It is a duty never to pull the alarm chain except in well-defined and rare emergencies and never to travel without due payment for the class in which we travel. Loot, arson and murder have never been part of my programme of so-called lawlessness. The answer to the argument that whilst my programme may be good enough for a select few, it can never be for the masses, lies in the question whether I am expected to starve the masses of good food for fear of their taking bad or poisonous food.

I have purposely entered upon what appears to be a personal note, not at all in self-defence, but in order to drive the point home that what is said to be going on in Bihar is administration of rank poison. That way lies not self-rule but licentiousness, not independence but helpless dependence, not life but suicide. Is Bihar of Brijkishore Prasad and Rajendra Prasad

that I have known and lived in come to the pass described above? Let the public workers of Bihar not permit the senseless destruction of the fair work of construction done with patient toil. Bihar beware!

New Delhi, 29-9-'46
Harijan, 6-10-1946

95

SOME POSERS

Q. The growth of parties in the Congress is having a very adverse effect on the Congress organization. What is the remedy?

A. There can be only one party in the Congress, i. e. that of Congressmen and no other. That is not to say that there is no room in the Congress for individuals or groups holding different opinions. I do not believe in dead uniformity. "All men are born equal and free" is not Nature's law in the literal sense. All men are not born equal in intellect, for instance, but the doctrine of equality will be vindicated if those who have superior intellect will use it not for self-advancement at the expense of others, but for the service of those who are less favoured in that respect than they. Today there are all sorts in the Congress. That is why I have suggested the removal of the words "peaceful and legitimate" from the Congress objective. That need not mean abandonment of truth and non-violence by Congressmen. The object is only to purge out hypocrisy. It jars. Let those who believe in the doctrine of the sword openly avow it. To take the name of non-violence when there is sword in your heart, is not only hyprocritical and dishonest but cowardly. Our non-violence *vis-a-vis* the British Government has been the non-violence of the weak. Otherwise, why should there be all these wrangles among ourselves? We try to justify the disorganization and chaos in our midst by pointing to the example of "squatters" in England, forgetting that blind imitation will not help us. There is nothing more demoralizing than fake non-violence of the weak and impotent. If we had the requisite non-violence in us, our public

life would be characterized by utmost toleration. There will then be room for as many parties as there are opinions. Differences of opinion would be an indication of healthy independence of mind which is the law of life, not party intrigues and party strife. The latter are incompatible with independence.

Q. How should the Hindu-Muslim question be tackled?

A. I must own defeat on that point. I know that mine is today a voice in the wilderness and yet I claim that mine is the only practicable solution. I can never subscribe to the view that because certain members of a particular community have indulged in inhuman acts, therefore the whole community may be condemned outright and put beyond the pale. The Muslim League may call Hindus names and declare India to be *Dar-ul-Harb*, where the law of *jehad* operates, and all Muslims who co-operate with the Congress as Quislings fit only to be exterminated. But we must not cease to aspire, in spite of this wild talk, to befriend all Mussalmans and hold them fast as prisoners of our love. It would be a present possibility if Hindus in their lakhs offered themselves to be cut to pieces without retaliation or anger in their hearts. Non-violence is today rightly laughed out of court as Utopian. Nevertheless, I maintain that it is the only way to keep Hinduism alive and India undivided. The history of the Congress non-violence for the last twentyfive years has taught us nothing, if it has not taught us that.

Q. How can we counteract the activities of the Communists, who are openly opposing the Congress?

A. The principle which I have laid down *vis-a-vis* the Hindu-Muslim question also holds good in respect of the Communists. By "Muslim" I mean the Muslim League. For, not all the Muslims are Muslim Leaguers. The Muslim Leaguers have today raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering pure and simple. It is nonsense to say that any people can permanently crush or swamp out of existence one fourth of its population, which the Mussalmans are in India. But I would have no hesitation in conceding the demand of Pakistan if I could be convinced of its righteousness or that it is good for Islam. But I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is

un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful. Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam. They may cut me to pieces but they cannot make me subscribe to something which I consider to be wrong.

The question of the Communists stands on a slightly different footing. They seem to have made trouble-shooting their profession. I have friends among them. Some of them are like sons to me. But it seems they do not make any distinction between fair and foul, truth and falsehood. They deny the charge. But their reported acts seem to sustain it. Moreover, they seem to take their instructions from Russia, which they regard as their spiritual home rather than India. I cannot countenance this dependence on an outside power. I have even said that we should not depend even on Russian wheat in our present food crisis. We must have the ability and courage to subsist on what our soil can give us rather than depend on foreign charity. Otherwise, we shall not deserve to exist as an independent country. The same applies to foreign ideologies. I would accept them only to the extent that I can assimilate them and adapt them to the Indian scene. But I must refuse to go under them.

My formula for the Communists, therefore, is that I would prefer to die at their hands, but I will not retaliate.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46
Harijan, 6-10-1946

REAL INDIA

If my frequent wanderings throughout India of the villages have not deceived me, it can be confidently asserted that the 700,000 villages get and want no police protection. The solitary Patel to a village is a terrorist lording it over the villages and is designed for helping the petty revenue collector to collect revenue due to the *Ma-Bap*. I am not aware of the policeman having aided the villages in protecting their goods or cattle against depredations of man and beast. The Police Patel is not to be blamed for what he is. He has been chosen for his task which he does well. He has not been taught to regard himself as the servant of the people. He represents his master the Viceroy. The change at the top has not yet permeated the most distant village. How can it? It has not come from the bottom. The Viceroy still retains legal and military powers to remove and even to imprison his Ministers. The latter have no power, legal or other, to imprison the Viceroy. Even the Civil Service is still under his control. It is not suggested that the Viceroy does not mean to shed all power nor that he does not wish the most distant village to realize that he is determined under instructions from Whitehall to shed every vestige of British control in the quickest time possible.

The relevance of all this writing is for showing that we do not yet learn from the village in which India lives that every Indian, man or woman, is his or her own policeman. This he or she can only do when neither harbours mischief against his or her neighbour, no matter what religion he professes or denies. If unfortunately the politically minded will not or cannot go as far as suggested here, he must at least shed all fear and resolutely deny himself all protection whether from the military or the police. I am positive that India will not come into her own unless every home becomes its own castle, not in the sense of the ages known as dark, but in the very ancient true sense that everyone has learnt the art of dying without ill will, or even wishing that since he cannot someone else will do away with the would-be assassin. How nice, therefore, it would be

if every one of us had this lesson burnt into us. There is much proof in support of the lesson, if we will take the trouble to examine the proof.

New Delhi, 12-10-'46
Harijan, 20-10-1946

97

WAYS OF VIOLENCE

A straight line is one. Non-violence is a straight line. Lines that are not straight are many. A child who has learnt how to handle a pen can draw as many lines as he wishes. He won't draw a straight line except perhaps by chance. Several readers ask me whether in the violence "permitted" by me several things mentioned by them could be included. Strange to say all the letters received are in English! The writers should re-read my article and they will at once know why I cannot answer those questions. I am unfit probably for the simple reason that I have never practised violence. Above all I have never permitted violence. I have simply stated two grades of bravery and cowardice. The only thing lawful is non-violence. Violence can never be lawful in the sense meant here i.e. not according to man-made law but according to the law made by Nature for man. Though violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission. The latter befits neither man nor woman. Under violence, there are many stages and varieties of bravery. Every man must judge this for himself. No other person can or has the right.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46
Harijan, 27-10-1946

WOMEN'S ORDEAL

"It is not death that matters but how you meet death," Gandhiji remarked on one occasion. To die at the hands of one's brother is a privilege, provided you die bravely. But what about women who were being abducted and forcibly converted? That no one could be 'converted' forcibly was here beside the point. "And why should Indian women feel so helpless? Is bravery the monopoly of men only? Women of course do not generally carry swords though the Rani of Jhansi did and outdid all her contemporaries in the valour of the sword. Still all cannot become Ranis of Jhansi. But all women can emulate the example of Sita whom even the mighty Ravana dared not touch. Ranis of Jhansi could be subdued."

"Let no one dismiss the example of Sita as legendary," he proceeded and gave the example of Olive Doke who dared to go and live among the unclad primitive Negro tribes in the heart of Africa without fear of molestation. It was that higher type of valour which he wanted Indian womanhood to cultivate. The military and police might protect them from abduction but what about those who had already been abducted or who might be abducted in spite of the police and the military. They ought to learn to die before a hair of their head could be injured. He averred that it was possible for a woman to put an end to herself by choking or biting the tongue.

Death before Dishonour

The next evening he had to revise the technique suggested above. Dr. Sushila who had heard him the day before had told him—Dr. B. C. Roy who saw him the next morning confirmed her statement—that one could not end one's life by choking or biting one's tongue. The only way known to medicine for instant self-immolation was a strong, poisonous dose. If this was so, he, the speaker, would advise every one running the risk of dishonour to take poison before submission to dishonour. He had, however, heard from those given to *yogic* practices that it was possible by some *yogic* practice to end life. He would try

to inquire. His was not an idle idea. He meant all he had said. The very fact of steeling oneself for death before dishonour braced one for the struggle. Woman in our country was brought up to think that she was well only with her husband or on the funeral pyre. He would far rather see India's women trained to wield arms, said the speaker, than that they should feel helpless. The vogue of carrying daggers and revolvers by women was on the increase. He knew, however, that arms were a poor weapon when it came to the matter of defending one's honour against odds. Arms were a symbol of one's helplessness, not strength. When one was deprived of them, generally there was nothing left but surrender.

He then referred to a letter received from a Muslim friend to the effect that he (Gandhiji) was ready to condemn atrocities by Muslims but preferred to be silent when Hindus committed them. He could only say that the charge was baseless. To him all human beings were like his blood brothers.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46
Harijan, 27-10-1946

99

NO SIN LIKE COWARDICE

Gandhiji, while referring to the outraged womanhood of East Bengal said in a prayer discourse that our women were easily scared away. His advice to them to commit suicide rather than allow themselves to be dishonoured had been much misunderstood. They could keep a dagger for self-defence if they wished to. But a dagger was no use against overwhelming odds. He had advised them to take poison and end their lives rather than submit to dishonour. Their very preparedness should make them brave. No one could dishonour a woman who was fearless of death. They had two ways of self-defence—to kill and be killed, or to die without killing. He could teach them the latter, not the former. Above all he wanted them to be fearless. There was no sin like cowardice.

But there was a moral code even for those who believed in violence. He did not wish them to copy the methods said to

have been adopted in East Bengal. They must have read Maulana Saheb's statement and the statement issued by the ex-President of the All India Majlis-e-Ahrar. They had said that Islam did not permit forcible conversions or abduction and molestation of women.

New Delhi, 27-10-'46
Harijan, 3-11-1946

100

NOT SWORD BUT CHARACTER

Addressing a gathering of women who had assembled at the courtyard of the house where he is residing at Chandipur, Gandhiji said that women should depend on God and on their own strength and not on others. They should be more courageous and should have more confidence in their own strength. If they were afraid, they would fall easy victims to the onslaughts of the miscreants.

"Indian women are not *abalas*. They are famous for their heroic deeds of the past, which they did not achieve with the help of the sword, but of character. Even today they can help the nation in many ways. They can do some useful work by which they can not only help themselves, but also the nation as a whole, thereby taking the country nearer her goal."

Gandhiji told them that not the men of Noakhali only were responsible for all that had happened, but women too were equally responsible. He asked them all to be fearless and have faith in God like Draupadi and Sita of the past.

Harijan, 26-1-1947

A WOMAN'S DILEMMA

Q. What is a woman to do when attacked by miscreants? To run away, or resist with violence? To have boats in readiness to fly or prepare to defend with weapons?

A. My answer to this question is very simple. For me there can be no preparation for violence. All preparation must be for non-violence if courage of the highest type is to be developed. Violence can only be tolerated as being preferable always to cowardice. Therefore I would have no boats ready for a flight in emergency. For a non-violent person there is no emergency, but quiet dignified preparation for death. Hence whether it is a man or a woman he or she will defy death even when he or she is unassisted; for real assistance is from God. I can preach no other thing and I am here to practise what I preach. Whether such an opportunity will occur to me or be given to me I do not know. If there are women who when assailed by miscreants cannot resist themselves without arms they do not need to be advised to carry arms. They will do so. There is something wrong in this constant enquiry as to whether to bear arms or not. People have to learn to be naturally independent. If they will remember the central teaching, namely, that the real effective resistance lies in non-violence, they will model their conduct accordingly. And that is what the world has been doing although unthinkingly. Since it is not the highest courage, namely, courage born of non-violence, it arms itself even unto the atom bomb. Those who do not see in it the futility of violence will naturally arm themselves to the best of their ability.

In India since my return from South Africa, there has been conscious and constant training in non-violence with the result we have seen.

Q. Can a woman be advised to take her own life rather than surrender?

A. This question requires a definite answer. I answered it in Delhi just before leaving for Noakhali. A woman would

most certainly take her own life rather than surrender. In other words, surrender has no room in my plan of life. But I was asked in what way to take one's own life. I promptly said it was not for me to prescribe the means, and behind the approval of suicide under such circumstances was and is the belief that one whose mind is prepared for even suicide will have requisite courage for such mental resistance and such internal purity that her assailant will be disarmed. I could not carry the argument any further because it does not admit of further development. It requires positive proof which, I own, is lacking.

Q. If the choice is between taking one's own life or that of the assailant, which would you advise?

A. When it is a question of choice between killing oneself or the assailant, I have no doubt in my mind that the first should be the choice.

Palla, 27-1-'47
Harijan, 9-2-1947

102

A FRIENDLY OVERTURE

"We are today suffering from a double evil—suppression of facts and concoction," remarked Gandhiji to a Director of an influential British daily paper who had come to see him at New Delhi and told him that his paper was anxious to do a friendly turn to India. "It does not pay to emphasize news about riots. My paper does not," he had remarked. But Gandhiji told him that he and his paper would be doing a real service to India not by suppressing relevant facts but by presenting them truthfully, without bias or prejudice. "Truth never damages a cause that is just," he said.

Replying to another question as to when the present trouble would end, Gandhiji remarked that it was bound to go, though he did not see any signs of abatement just yet. "There are interested parties fomenting it."

"Mine may be a voice in the wilderness today," he added, "but I maintain that so long as British troops are here, both

Hindus and Mussalmans will continue to look up to them for help and the trouble will continue. Nothing worse could happen to a people struggling to be free."

British Troops An Obstacle

This shocked the British conscience of the friend. "The Britisher would like his troops to go out quicker. Who obstructs ?" he asked.

"Who else but the British themselves, unless you can show that it is physically impossible to effect immediate withdrawal," replied Gandhiji.

After some parrying the friend admitted that the British commercial and other vested interests in India and their henchmen stood in the way of their withdrawal. He was, however, still doubtful as to the function of British troops in the maintenance of law and order. "You say, there can be no peace while they are here. Yet everyday there is an increasing demand for them for the maintenance of peace. The complaint is that they are not sufficiently used."

"That is the very reason," replied Gandhiji, "why they should be withdrawn. Their presence, in my opinion, does not act as a preventive measure but becomes punitive. Where they are used to maintain law and order, it is after the trouble. Future historians will bear this out. Order will be restored in East Bengal too. But after what slaughter, what suffering ?"

"No," he continued. "The British troops are in India not to protect India but to protect British interests which were imposed on India and which are now so well entrenched that even the British Government cannot dislodge them. The British did not come here as philanthropists, nor is there any altruism in their continued stay here or the continuation of their troops, all that might be claimed to the contrary notwithstanding."

To End War

The conversation then turned on the question of war. "How do you think the succession of wars such as we have witnessed of late can be stopped ?" he asked.

"I have no doubt," replied Gandhiji, "that unless big nations shed their desire of exploitation and the spirit of violence of

which war is the natural expression and atom bomb the inevitable consequence, there is no hope for peace in the world. I tried to speak out during the war and wrote open letters to the British people, to Hitler and to the Japanese and was dubbed a fifth columnist for my pains."

"But non-violence might take a long time to act. But for the second front there probably would have been no Russia," argued the friend.

"All these are arguments dictated by reason," replied Gandhiji. "It is not permitted me to think in these terms or else I would be denying my faith which today burns brighter than ever in spite of all the bitter experiences that I have had. History provides us with a whole series of miracles of masses of people being converted to a particular viewpoint in the twinkling of an eye. Take the Boer War. It has given to the English language the word 'Maffeking'. People went mad on the Maffeking Day. Yet inside of two years the whole British nation underwent a transformation. Henry Campbell Bannerman became the Premier and practically all the gains of war were given up." The recent Labour victory at the polls was another instance in point. "To me it is a sufficient miracle that in spite of his oratory and brilliance, Churchill should cease to be the idol of the British people who till yesterday hung on his lips and listened to him in awe. All these instances are enough to sustain the faith of a believer like me that when all other powers are gone one will remain, call it God, Nature or whatever you like." His own faith in the triumph of non-violence he likened to that of the witnesses in the Second Coming of Christ. It was to take place within the lifetime of the witnesses though it has taken two thousand years and yet remains a distant dream. Faith could think in no other terms.

Sodepur, 30-10-'46
Harijan, 10-11-1946

103

THE TRAVAIL

A friend was discussing with Gandhiji the other day the recent gruesome happenings in Calcutta. His sensitive and refined spirit shrank from the very idea of narrow communalism. What filled him with anguish was not the loss of life so much, deplorable as it was, as the degradation of the human spirit that had resulted from the Calcutta happenings. "Even those who never thought in terms of communalism are now becoming communal-minded. But that was not all. The madness has spread."

As Gandhiji sat listening to the stories that came from Bengal, his mind was made up. "If I leave Delhi," he remarked, "it will not be in order to return to Sevagram but only to go to Bengal. Else, I would stay here and stew in my own juice."

He consulted two friends from Bengal that evening about it. "Allow us to go there first and report," said they. "Give us a chance to do our bit and then, if necessary, you can come." Gandhiji agreed.

In the course of the talk, one of them asked Gandhiji whether he would recommend fasting to check the orgy of communal madness that was spreading in Bengal. Gandhiji's reply was in the negative. He narrated how a valuable colleague from Ahmedabad had invited him to immolate himself. "We believe in the non-violent way but lack the strength. Your example would steady our wavering faith and fortify us." The logic was perfect and the temptation great. "But I resisted it and said 'no'. There is no inner call. When it comes, nothing will keep me back. I have reasoned with myself too about it. But I need not set forth my reasons. Let people call me a coward if they please. I have faith that when the hour arrives God will give me the strength to face it and I won't be found unready."

The Way Of The Cross

"Fasting cannot be undertaken mechanically," he proceeded. "It is a powerful thing but a dangerous thing if handled amateurishly. It requires complete self-purification, much

more than what is required in facing death with retaliation even in mind. One such act of perfect sacrifice would suffice for the whole world. Such is held to be Jesus' example."

"The idea is," he continued, "that you appropriate to yourself and assimilate the essence of his sacrifice, symbolically represented by the bread and wine of the Eucharist. A man who was completely innocent offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act. 'It is finished' were the last words of Jesus, and we have the testimony of his four disciples as to its authenticity.

"But whether the Jesus tradition is historically true or not I do not care. To me it is truer than history because I hold it to be possible and it enshrines an eternal law — the law of vicarious and innocent suffering taken in its true sense."

He then proceeded to show how the lesson of Jesus could be applied to the present situation. "A Hindu and a Mussalman braved the fury of the maddened crowd in Bombay and went down together literally clasped in a fatal embrace but refused to desert each other. Rajab Ali and Vasantrao Hegishte similarly fell to mob frenzy in the attempt to quell it. "What came out of it?" people might ask, "the fire still continues to rage." I do not think for a moment it has gone in vain. We may not see the effect today. Our non-violence is as yet a mixed affair. It limps. Nevertheless, it is there and it continues to work like a leaven in a silent and invisible way, least understood by most. It is the only way." As a further illustration of his remarks he recalled the history of the Champaran Satyagraha. There had been several bloody risings within half a century preceding it against the infamous compulsory indigo plantation. But each attempt had only resulted in fastening the rivets tighter than ever before. Then came the Champaran mass Satyagraha, untainted by acts of violence, and a century-old evil was overthrown in less than six months.

"Go forth, therefore," he concluded. "I have done. I won't detain you for a day longer. You have my blessings. And I tell you there will be no tears but only joy, if tomorrow I get the news that all the three of you are killed."

"It will be pure joy to be so killed," they echoed.

"But mark my words," he resumed. "Let there be no foolhardiness about it. You should go because you feel you must and not because I ask you to."

"That goes without saying," they answered together as they took leave to go forth and face the flames.

In God's Hands

Remarked Gandhiji at the evening prayer gathering that day that he had received numerous messages from Bengal inviting him to go there and still the raging fury. Whilst he did not believe that he had any such capacity, he was anxious to go to Bengal. Only he thought it was his duty to wait till Pandit Nehru's return and the meeting of the Working Committee. But he was in God's hands. If he clearly felt that he should wait for nothing, he would not hesitate to anticipate the date. His heart was in Bengal.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46
Harijan, 27-10-1946

104

THE ORGY OF MADNESS

The week's events were not calculated to lift the darkness that had descended on Gandhiji's spirit and to which I referred last week. "I am trying to take my bearings, to see where I stand," he casually remarked the other day in the course of a conversation. He has since been pouring out his anguish in a series of prayer gathering addresses. There was first the flood havoc in Assam. Thousands had been rendered homeless, property worth lakhs had been destroyed and many lives lost. That was an act of God. But far worse than the news from Assam was the fact that an orgy of madness had seized a section of humanity in Bengal. Man had sunk lower than the brute. Reports were coming through that the Hindus, who are in a very small minority there, were being attacked by Mussalmans. Ever since he had heard of the happenings in Noakhali he had been furiously thinking as to what his own duty was. God would

show him the way. He knew that his stock had gone down with the people so far as the teaching of non-violence was concerned. They still showered affection upon him. He appreciated their affection and felt thankful for it. But the only way in which he could express his thanks and appreciation was to place before them and through them the world the truth which God had vouchsafed to him and to the pursuit of which his whole life was devoted, even at the risk of forfeiting their affection and regard. At the moment, he felt prompted to tell them that it would be wrong on the part of the Hindus to think in terms of reprisals for what had happened in Noakhali and elsewhere in East Bengal. Non-violence was the creed of the Congress. It had brought them to their present strength. But it would be counted only as a coward's expedient if its use was to be limited only against the British power which was strong, and while violence was to be freely used against our own brethren. He refused to believe that they could ever adopt that as their creed. Although the Congress had an overwhelming majority of the Hindus on its membership rolls, he maintained that it was by no means a Hindu organization and that it belonged equally to all communities. He had told Acharya Kripalani, who had succeeded Pandit Nehru in the Presidentship of the Congress, that it was going to prove no feather-bed for him. If the Chief Minister of the Cabinet had to wear a crown of thorns the Congress President would have to lie on a bed of thorns. The late Sir Syed Ahmed had called Hindus and Mussalmans the two eyes of India. The Congress President could not possibly discriminate between the two. He was pledged to equally serve both. He, the speaker, had therefore asked him to proceed on a mission of peace to East Bengal to teach people the art of dying without killing. It should be his privilege to demonstrate it by his personal example. He was going there with his wife not to protect one party but to stop the fratricide which threatened to overwhelm India. It was a good beginning for Acharya Kripalani and his wife. Sarat Babu, the brother of the late Subhas Babu, was going with them. He knew no barriers of caste or creed. Some years ago he was staying at Sarat Babu's house. He came to know how Subhas Babu used to look up to Sarat Babu.

The fair name of Bengal was being tarnished—Bengal that had given them so much, Bengal the home of Gurudev whose

bhajan they had just heard sung. That hymn asked God to make the devotee wide-hearted and fearless. It was with that hymn on their lips that they were going and it was the audience's duty to wish them every success.

A Word To The Muslim League

He appealed to the Muslim League too to turn the search-light inward. They had decided to come into the Interim Government. He hoped they were coming in to work as brothers. If they did, all would be well. And just as he had exhorted Hindus not to slay Mussalmans nor harbour ill-will towards them, so he appealed to the Muslim League, even if they wanted to fight for Pakistan, to fight cleanly and as brothers. The Qaid-e-Azam had said that minorities would be fully protected and everyone would receive justice in Pakistan. It was as good as Pakistan where they were in the majority and he implored them to treat Hindus as blood brothers and not as enemies. It boded ill for Pakistan if what was happening in East Bengal was an earnest of things to come. He hoped Hindus and Muslims respectively would stand mutually as surety and pledge themselves to see that not a hair of the head of the minority community in their midst was injured. Unless they learnt to do that, he would say that their assumption of the reins of power was a mere blind. What was going on in Bengal was not worthy of human beings. They had to learn to be human beings first.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46
Harijan, 27-10-1946

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THE CALL

After much travail, deep thought and considerable argument, Gandhiji fixed the date of his departure for Bengal for the 28th of October. "I do not know what I shall be able to do there," he remarked in the course of an argument with a very esteemed friend, who made an eleventh hour effort to dissuade him from setting out on such a long journey just then. "All I know is that I won't be at peace with myself unless I go there." He then went on to describe the "power of thought". "There are

two kinds of thought — idle and active. There may be myriads of the former swarming in one's brain. They do not count." He likened them to unfertilized ova in a spawn. "But one pure, active thought, proceeding from the depth and endowed with all the undivided intensity of one's being, becomes dynamic and works like a fertilized ovum." He was averse to put a curb on the spontaneous urge which he felt within him to go to the people of Noakhali. Speaking before the evening prayer gathering on Sunday last at New Delhi, Gandhiji said that he was leaving for Calcutta the next morning. He did not know when God would bring him again to Delhi. He wanted to go to Noakhali from Calcutta. It was a difficult journey and he was in poor health. But one had to do one's duty and trust in God to make the way smooth. It was not that God necessarily and always removed hardships from one's path, but He did always enable one to bear them.

He did not want anyone to come to the station, he continued. India had given him enough affection. It needed no further demonstration.

He was not going to Bengal to pass judgment on anybody. He was going there as a servant of the people and he would meet Hindus and Muslims alike. Some Muslims looked upon him as an enemy today. They had not done so always. But he did not mind their anger. Were not his own religionists angry with him at times? From the age of seventeen he had learnt the lesson that all mankind, be they of any nationality, colour or country were his own kith and kin. If they were God's servants, they had to become servants of all His creation.

It was in that capacity that he was going to Bengal. He would tell them that Hindus and Muslims could never be enemies, one of the other. They were born and brought up in India and they had to live and die in India. Change of religion could not alter that fundamental fact. If some people liked to believe that change of religion changed one's nationality also, even they need not become enemies.

Sufferings of women had always melted his heart. He wanted to go to Bengal and wipe their tears and put heart into them, if he could. In Calcutta he would try to see the Governor and the Prime Minister Mr. Suhrawardy and then proceed to Noakhali.

To make peace between quarrelling parties, the speaker said, had been his vocation from his early youth. Even while he practised as a lawyer, he tried to bring the contending parties together. Why could not the two communities be brought together? He was an optimist, he said.

From them he wanted only this help: that they should pray with him that this mutual slaughter might stop and the two communities might really become one at heart. Whether India was to become divided or remain one whole could not be decided by force. It had to be done through mutual understanding. Whether they decided to part or stay together, they must do so with goodwill and understanding.

He could never be party to anything which might mean humiliation or loss of self-respect for anyone. Therefore any peace to be substantial must be honourable, never at the cost of honour. In this he was only echoing the sentiment expressed to him by a prominent Muslim who had seen him. This friend had said: "We must reach our goal, whatever it might be—Pakistan or undivided India—without bloodshed or fighting. I go so far as to say that if it cannot be reached except through bloodshed and fighting amongst ourselves, it is not worth reaching."

The Grim Resolve

"Why do you want to go to Noakhali? You did not go to Bombay, Ahmedabad or Chhapra, where things have happened that are infinitely worse than Noakhali. Would not your going there only add to the existing tension?" Was it because in these places it was the Muslims who had been the sufferers that he did not go there and would go to Noakhali because the sufferers there were Hindus?—he was asked by a Muslim friend the other day. Gandhiji's reply was that he made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim. He would certainly have gone straight to any of the places mentioned by the friend, if anything approaching what had happened at Noakhali had happened there and if he felt that he could do nothing without being on the spot. It was the cry of outraged womanhood that had peremptorily called him to Noakhali. He felt he would find his bearings only on seeing things for himself at Noakhali. His technique of non-violence was on trial. It remained to be seen how it would answer in the face of the present crisis. If

it had no validity it were better that he himself should declare his insolvency. He was not going to leave Bengal until the last embers of the trouble were stamped out. "I may stay on here for a whole year or more. If necessary, I will die here. But I will not acquiesce in failure. If the only effect of my presence in the flesh is to make people look up to me in hope and expectation which I can do nothing to vindicate, it would be far better that my eyes were closed in death." He had mentally prepared himself, he added, for abstention from the Congress session, if necessary. He had similarly disengaged himself mentally from all his responsibilities in respect of Sevagram and Uruli — his latest love.

But with all his impatience to get to Noakhali he had to announce on the fourth day at the prayer gathering that he would not be able to leave for Noakhali on the next day as he had intended to. The Prime Minister had sent him word that the train for him could not be arranged so soon. He hoped to leave on Saturday or Sunday. In the meantime he would try to render whatever service he could to the metropolis.

Sodepur, 1-11-'46
Harijan, 10-11-1946

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BAD NEWS FROM BIHAR

Fallen upon evil times as we are, we have to be thankful even for small mercies. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when it was known that the *Bakr Id* had passed off quietly all over India. But the news from Bihar had set Gandhiji at war with himself. It was in Bihar that mass Satyagraha in India was born. It was in Bihar that his political career in India had practically commenced. And now it was the people of Bihar, for whom he had indefatigably laboured and who had showered upon him such love and affection — Bihar of Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu — that had gone mad and besmirched the fair name of India. He had declared times without number that if the people of India should run amok against the English, they might find him dead. How could he be a witness to the same in

regard to innocent Mussalmans who were after all our countrymen, our own kith and kin. "I went on spare, milkless diet, principally for reasons of health soon after coming to Calcutta. The happenings in the country induced me to prolong it. Now Bihar will send me to complete fast if things do not radically mend," he wrote in a letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on Sunday the 4th. "There will be no time limit," he added. "Do not agitate yourself but be really glad that I feel I have the strength to go through the ordeal and live up to my creed." On the following day in a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal he wrote: "The news from Bihar has shaken me. My own duty seems to me to be clear. A deep bond unites me with Bihar. How can I forget that? If even half of what one hears is true, is shows that Bihar has forgotten humanity. To blame it all on the *goondas* would be an untruth. Although I have striven hard to avert a fast, I can do so no longer . . . . My inner voice tells me, 'You may not live to be a witness to this senseless slaughter. If people refuse to see what is clear as daylight and pay no heed to what you say, does it not mean that your day is over?' The logic of the argument is driving me irresistibly towards a fast. I, therefore, propose to issue a statement* that unless this orgy of madness ceases, I must go on a fast unto death. The fast may have to be delayed for some time. When you asked me at Delhi about it, I had replied that I was not thinking of it at the time. All that has now changed. You can strive with me, if you think differently. Whatever you say will carry weight with me. But knowing as you do my temperament, I am sure you will approve of my proposed step. In any event you will go on with your work without a moment's thought about my possible death and leave me in God's good care. No worry allowed." But neither Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru nor the Sardar to whom he had caused a copy of the letter to be sent tried to dissuade him. They understood better the magnitude of the stake. It was nothing less than India's independence.

Chaumuhani, 8-11-'46
Harijan, 17-11-1946

* The Statement follows immediately in the present volume under the caption 'To Bihar'.

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TO BIHAR

To Bihar,

Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them. I am not relying upon reports that might be prejudiced or exaggerated. The continued presence of the Central Chief Minister and his colleague furnishes an eloquent tale of the tragedy of Bihar. It is easy enough to retort that things under the Muslim League Government in Bengal were no better, if not worse, and that Bihar is merely a result of the latter. A bad act of one party is no justification for a similar act by the opposing party, more especially when it is rightly proud of its longest and largest political record. I must confess, too, that although I have been in Calcutta for over a week, I do not yet know the magnitude of the Bengal tragedy. Though Bihar calls me, I must not interrupt my programme for Noakhali. And is counter-communalism any answer to the communalism of which Congressmen have accused the Muslim League? Is it nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen percent of the Muslims in Bihar?

I do not need to be told that I must not condemn the whole of Bihar for the sake of the sins of a few thousand Biharis. Does not Bihar take credit for one Brijkishore Prasad or one Rajendra Prasad? I am afraid, if the misconduct in Bihar continues, all the Hindus of India will be condemned by the world. That is its way, and it is not a bad way either. The misdeeds of Bihari Hindus may justify Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt that the Congress is a Hindu organization in spite of its boast that it has in its ranks a few Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others. Bihari Hindus are in honour bound to regard the minority Muslims as their brethren requiring protection, equal with the vast majority of Hindus. Let not Bihar, which has done so much to raise the prestige of the Congress, be the first to dig its grave.

I am in no way ashamed of my *ahimsa*. I have come to Bengal to see how far in the nick of time my *ahimsa* is able to express itself in me. But I do not want in this letter to talk of

ahimsa to you. I do want, however, to tell you that what you are reported to have done will never count as an act of bravery. For thousands to do to death a few hundreds is no bravery. It is worse than cowardice. It is unworthy of nationalism, of any religion. If you had given a blow against a blow, no one would have dared to point a finger against you. What you have done is to degrade yourselves and drag down India.

You should say to Pandit Jawaharlalji, Nishtar Saheb and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to take away their military and themselves and attend to the affairs of India. This they can only do, if you repent of your inhumanity and assure them that Muslims are as much your care as your own brothers and sisters.

You should not rest till every Muslim refugee has come back to his home which you should undertake to rebuild, and ask your Ministers to help you to do so. You do not know what critics have said to me about your Ministers.

I regard myself as a part of you. Your affection has compelled that loyalty in me. And since I claim to have better appreciation than you seem to have shown of what Bihari Hindus should do, I cannot rest till I have done some measure of penance. Predominantly for reasons of health, I had put myself on the lowest diet possible soon after my reaching Calcutta. That diet now continues as a penance after the knowledge of the Bihar tragedy. The low diet will become a fast unto death, if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf.

There is no danger of Bihar mistaking my act for anything other than pure penance as a matter of sacred duty.

No friend should run to me for assistance or to show sympathy. I am surrounded by loving friends. It would be wholly wrong and irrelevant for any other person to copy me. No sympathetic fast or semi-fast is called for. Such action can only do harm. What my penance should do is to quicken the conscience of those who know me and believe in my *bona fides*. Let no one be anxious for me. I am like all of us in God's keeping.

Nothing will happen to me so long as He wants service through the present tabernacle.

Sodepur, 6-11-'46 — Your Servant
Harijan, 10-11-1946 — M. K. GANDHI

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A CHALLENGE TO FAITH

[The following are questions put by the correspondent of the Associated Press of America and Gandhiji's answers to them (6-11-'46).]

Q. 1. In view of recent Indian history — 1942 unrest, I. N. A. movement and unrest, R. I. N. mutiny, Calcutta-Bombay disturbances, movements in Indian States such as Kashmir and recent communal riots — can it be said your creed of non-violence has failed, insofar as non-violence has not taken roots in Indian life?

A. This is a dangerous generalization. All you mention can certainly be called *himsa* but that can never mean that the creed of non-violence has failed. At best it may be said that I have not yet found the technique required for the conversion of the mass mind. But I claim that the millions of the 7,00,000 villages of India have not participated in the violence alluded to by you. Whether non-violence has taken roots in Indian life is still an open question which can only be answered after my death.

Q. 2. What should one do in his day-to-day life — that is, what is the minimum programme — so that one can acquire non-violence of the brave?

A. The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the *ahimsa* of the brave is first to clear one's thought of cowardice and in the light of the clearance regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employer, he has *ahimsa* of the brave in him. Assume that a fellow passenger threatens my son with assault and I reason with the would-be-assailant who then turns upon me. If then I take his blow with grace and dignity, without harbouring any ill-will against him, I exhibit the *ahimsa* of the brave. Such instances are of every day occurrence and can be easily multiplied. If I succeed in curbing my temper

every time and though able to give blow for blow I refrain, I shall develop the *ahimsa* of the brave which will never fail me and which will compel recognition from the most confirmed adversaries.

Harijan, 17-11-1946

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A VENTURE IN FAITH

Early in the morning on Wednesday last Gandhiji announced to his party an important decision. He had decided to disperse his party detailing each member, including the ladies, to settle down in one affected village and make himself or herself hostage of the safety and security of the Hindu minority of that village. They must be pledged to protect with their lives, if necessary, the Hindu population of that village. His decision was not binding on any one of his party, he said. Those who wanted to, were free to go away and take up any of his other constructive activities. "Those who have ill-will against the Mussalmans or Islam in their hearts or cannot curb their indignation at what has happened should stay away. They will only misrepresent me by working under this plan."

So far as he was concerned, he added that his decision was final and irrevocable and left no room for discussion. He was going to bury himself in East Bengal until such time that the Hindus and Mussalmans learnt to live together in harmony and peace. He would deprive himself of the services of all his companions and fend for himself with whatever assistance he could command locally.

That evening he explained his idea further to the party. A discussion followed in which Shri Thakkar Bapa and Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani also took part. His *ahimsa* would be incomplete, he argued, unless he took that step. Either *ahimsa* is the law of life or it is not. A friend used to say that the *Ahimsa* Sutra in Patanjali, *Ahimsa pratishthayam tatsannidhau vairatyagah* (अहिंसा-प्रतिष्ठायां तत्संनिधौ वैरत्यागः) was a mistake and

needed to be amended and the saying *Ahimsa paramodharmah* (अहिंसा परमोधर्मः ।) ought to be read as *Himsa paramodharmah* (हिंसा परमोधर्मः ।); in other words, violence, not non-violence was the supreme law. If at the crucial moment he lost faith in the law of non-violence, he must accept the deceased friend's amendment which appeared to him to be absurd.

"I know the women of Bengal better than probably the Bengalis do. Today they feel crushed and helpless. The sacrifice of myself and my companions would at least teach them the art of dying with self-respect. It might open too the eyes of the oppressors and melt their hearts. I do not say that the moment my eyes are closed theirs will open. But that will be the ultimate result, I have not the slightest doubt. If *ahimsa* disappears, *Hindu Dharma* disappears."

"The issue is not religious but political. It is not a movement against the Hindus, but against the Congress," remarked one member of the party.

"Do you not see that they think that the Congress is a purely Hindu body? And do not forget that I have no watertight compartments such as religious, political and others. Let us not lose ourselves in a forest of words. How to solve the tangle—violently or non-violently—is the question. In other words, has my method efficacy today?"

"How can you reason with people who are thirsting for your blood? Only the other day one of our workers was murdered," said another of the company.

"I know it," replied Gandhiji. "To quell the rage is our job."

Another member asked whether it was right to invite people to return to their villages under the prevailing conditions which involved a considerable amount of risk. Gandhiji's reply was that there was no harm in asking them to return to their villages if the Muslims of that village collectively guaranteed their safety and their guarantee was backed by one good Hindu and one good Mussalman, who would stay with them in that village and protect them by laying down their lives, if necessary. If there was that much guarantee, the refugees ought to return to their homes and face whatever risk there might be. If they had not the courage to live on these terms, Hinduism was doomed

to disappear from East Bengal. The question of East Bengal is not one of Bengal alone. The battle for India is today being decided in East Bengal. Today Mussalmans are being taught by some that Hindu religion is an abomination and therefore forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam a merit. It would save to Islam at least the descendants of those who were forcibly converted. If retaliation is to rule the day, the Hindus, in order to win, will have to outstrip the Mussalmans in the nefarious deeds that the latter are reported to have done. The United Nations set out to fight Hitler with his weapons and ended by out-Hitlering Hitler.

"How can we reassure the people when the miscreants are still at large in these villages?" was the last question asked of him.

"That is why," replied Gandhiji, "I have insisted upon one good Mussalman standing security along with a good Hindu for the safety and security of those who might be returning. The former will have to be provided by the Muslim Leaguers who form the Bengal Government."

In a letter to a friend he wrote from Dattapara: "The work I am engaged in here may be my last act. If I return from here alive and unscathed, it will be like a new birth to me. My *ahimsa* is being tried here through and through as it was never before."

Khajirkhil, 16-11-'46
Harijan, 24-11-1946

THE "DO OR DIE" MISSION

On the road of Satyagraha there is no stop, no resting place. One must always move on and onward or else retrogress. Gandhiji's decision which was described as *A venture in faith* above was taken at Dattapara. When he shifted to Kazirkhil, he moved another step forwards. He must live in a Muslim household, if a good Muslim Leaguer approved of by the Bengal Ministry would be prepared to receive him as a member of the family. He discussed the question with Goffran Saheb, the Minister for Civil Supplies, who saw him on the 16th and asked him if he could recommend him to any. The latter was taken aback at Gandhiji's living stripped of all his companions in the midst of those who would not know how to look after him. "I shall look after myself. I shall need nobody's service," argued Gandhiji. "Then, I am afraid, I must say that no Mussalman family is prepared to receive you," replied Goffran Saheb laughing. But Gandhiji was not to be put away easily. He expatiated on it in his discourse after the evening prayer. He was in the midst of a Muslim population in Noakhali, he said. He did not like the idea of staying with Hindu friends. He would like to see if he could stay with a League Mussalman. "My requirements are very few. All I want is cleanliness, clean water, permissible food and the freedom to pray to God in my own way." The idea was that if the Hindus saw him living with a Muslim League friend, they would probably get back their confidence and return to their homes more readily. "The Muslim friends will have an opportunity to examine me at close quarters and find out whether I am an enemy or friend."

But he did not want to postpone his new "Venture in Faith" till a Muslim household was ready to receive him. "When I was in detention in the Aga Khan Palace," he remarked one day, "I once sat down to write a thesis on India as a protagonist of Non-violence. But as I proceeded with my writing I could not go on. I had to stop. There are two aspects of Hinduism. There is on the one hand the historical Hinduism with its untouchability, superstitious worship of stocks and

stones, animal sacrifice and so on. On the other, we have the Hinduism of the *Gita*, the *Upanishads* and Patanjali's *Yogasutra* which is the acme of *ahimsa* and oneness of all creation, pure worship of one immanent, formless, imperishable God. *Ahimsa* which to me is the chief glory of Hinduism has been sought to be explained away by our people as being meant for *sannyasis* only. I do not share that view. I have held that it is *the* way of life and India has to show it to the world. Where do I stand? Do I represent this *ahimsa* in my person? If I do, then deceit and hatred that poison the atmosphere should dissolve. It is only by going into isolation from my companions, those on whose help I have relied all along, and standing on my own crutches that I shall find my bearings and also test my faith in God."

To Sevagram Ashram people he wrote:

"I am afraid you must give up all hope of my early returning or returning at all to the Ashram. The same applies to my companions. It is a herculean task that faces me. I am being tested. Is the Satyagraha of my conception a weapon of the weak or really that of the strong? I must either realize the latter or lay down my life in the attempt to attain it. That is my quest. In pursuit of it I have come to bury myself in this devastated village. His will be done."

On the 20th Gandhiji broke up his camp at Kazirkhil, Columbus-like, to face the dark unknown, accompanied only by his stenotypist, Shri Parsuram and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, his Bengali interpreter. Before embarking the little group round him held a short prayer when his favourite hymn "*Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye*" was sung. Many voices were husky, many eyes dim with tears as the tiny country boat bearing him disappeared beyond the bridge, in the direction of Shrirampur.

Following upon his departure the members of his party dispersed themselves one by one in various appointed places.

Kazirkhil, 24-11-'46
Harijan, 8-12-1946

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PRESS STATEMENT

On the eve of his departure for Shrirampur Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press:

I find myself in the midst of exaggeration and falsity. I am unable to discover the truth. There is terrible mutual distrust. Oldest friendships have snapped. Truth and *ahimsa* by which I swear, and which have to my knowledge sustained me for sixty years, seem to fail to show the attributes I have ascribed to them.

To test them, or better, to test myself, I am going to a village called Shrirampur, cutting myself away from those who have been with me all these years, and who have made life easy for me. I am taking Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose as my Bengali teacher and interpreter and Shri Parsuram, who has been my most devoted, selfless and silent stenographer.

The other workers, whom I have brought with me will each distribute themselves in other villages of Noakhali to do the work of peace, if it is at all possible, between the two communities. They are, unfortunately, all non-Bengalis except little Abha. They will, therefore, be accompanied by one Bengali worker each as teacher and interpreter, even like Prof. N. K. Bose will be to me.

Distribution work and selection work will be done by Sri Satish Chandra Dasgupta of the Khadi Pratisthan. My ideal is to live in a local Muslim League family, but I see that I must not wait for that happy day. I must meanwhile establish such contacts with the Muslims as I can in their own villages. My suggestion to the League Ministers is that they should give me one honest and brave Muslim to accompany one equally honest and brave Hindu for each affected village. They should guarantee at the cost of their lives if need be, the safety of the returning Hindu refugees. I am sorry to have to confess that without some such thing it seems to me difficult to induce them to return to their villages.

From all accounts received by me, life is not as yet smooth and safe for the minority community in the villages. They, therefore, prefer to live as exiles from their own homes, crops, plantations and surroundings, and live on inadequate and ill-balanced doles.

Many friends from outside Bengal have written to me to allow them to come for peace work, but I have strongly dissuaded them from coming. I would love to let them come if and when I see light through this impenetrable darkness.

In the meantime, both Pyarelal and I have decided to suspend all other activities in the shape of correspondence, including the heavy work of the *Harijan* and the allied weeklies. I have asked Shri Kishorlal, Shri Kakasaheb, Shri Vinoba and Shri Narhari Parikh to edit the weeklies jointly and severally. Pyarelal and I may, if our work permits, send stray contributions from our respective villages. Correspondence will be attended to from Sevagram.

How long this suspense will last, is more than I can say. This much, however, I can. I do not propose to leave East Bengal till I am satisfied that mutual trust has been established between the two communities and the two have resumed the even tenor of their life in their villages. Without this there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan — only slavery awaits India, torn asunder by mutual strife and engrossed in barbarity.

No one need at present be disturbed about my low diet. On receipt of the following wire from Dr. Rajendra Prasad :

> Letter received. Have already wired quiet. There have been no incidents for a week now. Situation satisfactory. Most earnestly desire resumption of normal diet. Myself going Delhi 19th,

I resumed goat's milk from yesterday and propose to revert to normal diet as early as the system permits. The future is in God's keeping.

Kazirkhil, 20-11-'46
Harijan, 1-12-1946

THE FIRST LESSON

The first lesson was delivered by Gandhiji at Chandpur when a group of 20 to 25 workers including the son of the late Babu Hardayal Nag and several representatives of various relief organizations met him in the dining saloon of the *Kiwi* on the morning of the 7th November. "What goes against the grain in me," Gandhiji told them, "is that a single individual can be forcibly converted or a single woman can be kidnapped or raped. So long as we feel we can be subjected to these indignities, we shall continue to be so subjected. If we say we cannot do without police or military protection, we really confess defeat even before the battle has begun. No police or military in the world can protect people who are cowards. Today you say, thousands of people are terrorizing a mere handful, so what can the latter do? But even a few individuals are enough to terrorize the whole mass, if the latter feel helpless. Your trouble is not numerical inferiority but the feeling of helplessness that has seized you and the habit of depending on others. The remedy lies with you. That is too why I am opposed to the idea of your evacuating from East Bengal *en masse*. It is no cure for impotence or helplessness."

"East Bengal is opposed to such a move," they replied.

"They should not leave," Gandhiji resumed. "20,000 able-bodied men prepared to die like brave men non-violently might today be regarded as a fairy tale. But it would be no fairy tale for every able-bodied man in a population of 20,000 to die like stalwart soldiers to a man in open fight. They will go down in history like the immortal five hundred of Leonidas who made Thermopylae." And he quoted the proud epitaph which marked the grave of the Thermopylae heroes :

Stranger ! Tell Sparta, here her sons are laid,
Such was her law and we that law obeyed.

A False Cry

"I will proclaim from the housetops," he continued, "that it is the only condition under which you can live in East Bengal.

You have asked for Hindu officers, Hindu police and Hindu military in the place of Muslim. It is a false cry. You forget that Hindu officers, Hindu police and Hindu military have in the past done all these things — looting, arson, abduction, rape. I come from Kathiawad — the land of petty principalities. I cannot describe to you to what depths of depravity human nature can go. No woman's honour is safe in some principalities and the chief is no hooligan but a duly annointed one."

"These are cases of individual depravity. Here we have got this on a mass scale."

"But the individual there is not alone. He is backed by the machinery of his little State."

A Poor Consolation

"He is condemned even by his compeers. Here such acts are not condemned by the Muslims."

"I have heard nothing but condemnation of these acts from Saheed Suhrawardy downwards since I have come here. Words of condemnation may tickle your ears. But they are no consolation to the unfortunate women whose houses have been laid desolate or who have been abducted, forcibly converted and forcibly married."

"What a shame for Hindus, what a disgrace for Islam," he exclaimed warming up. "No, I am not going to leave you in peace. Presently you will say to yourself, 'When will this man leave us and go?' But this man will not go. He did not come on your invitation and he will go on his own only, but with your blessings, when his mission in East Bengal is fulfilled."

"It is a part of their plan for Pakistan," put in one member of the deputation.

"It is midsummer madness and they have realized it. They will soon sicken of it. They have already begun to."

"Why do not they come here then and set this right?"

"That stage will come. Sickness only marks the crisis. Convalescence must precede cure." "You see I am a nature-curist," he added with a sardonic laugh in which all joined.

The Fallacy of Numbers

"But here we are a mere drop in the ocean," remarked another friend resuming the discussion.

Gandhiji replied that even if there was one Hindu in East Bengal, he wanted him to have the courage to go and live in the midst of the Mussalmans and die if he must like a hero. He should refuse to live as a serf and a slave. He might not have the non-violent strength to die without fighting. But he could command their admiration if he had the courage not to submit to wrong and died fighting like a man. "There is not a man, however cruel and hard-hearted, but would give his admiration to a brave man. A *goonda* is not the vile man he is imagined to be. He is not without his noble traits."

The friend who was leading the argument however was still sceptical. "A *goonda* does not understand reason," he said.

"But he understands bravery," replied Gandhiji. "If he finds that you are braver than he, he will respect you."

Armoury Raid Tradition

"You will note," continued Gandhiji, "that for the purposes of our present discussion I have not asked you to discard the use of arms. I can't provide you with arms. It is not for me to provide arms to the Chittagong Armoury Raid men," he remarked chaffing them. "The most tragic thing about the armoury raid people," he added "is that they could not even multiply themselves. Their bravery was lop-sided. It did not infect others."

That started a discussion on the Chittagong Armoury Raid group.

"No wonder it could not," answered one of the party. "They were condemned."

"By whom? I may have — that is a different thing."

"The people did do. I am myself an Armoury Raid man."

"They did not. You are no Armoury Raid man or, you should not have been here to tell these things. That so many of them should have remained living witnesses of the things that have happened is in my eyes a tragedy of the first order. If they had shown the same fearlessness and courage to face death in the present crisis as they did when they made that raid, they would have gone down in history as heroes. As it is, they have only inscribed a small footnote in the page of history. You will see I am not, as I have already said, asking you just now to unlearn the use of arms or to follow my type of heroism. I have

not made it good even in my own case. I have come here to test it in East Bengal. I want you to take up the conventional type of heroism. You should be able to infect others — both men and women — with courage and fearlessness to face death when the alternative is dishonour and humiliation. Then the Hindus can stay in East Bengal, not otherwise. After all, the Mussalmans are blood of our blood and bone of our bone."

"Here the proportion of Mussalmans and Hindus is 6 to 1. How can you expect us to stand against such heavy odds?"

"When India was brought under British subjection, there were 70,000 European soldiers against 33 crores of Indians."

"We have no arms. The Government backs them with its bayonets."

"The odds were much heavier against the Indians in South Africa. The Indian community there was a mere handful in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Europeans and Negroes. The Europeans had arms. We had none. So we forged the weapon of Satyagraha. Today the Indian is respected by the White man in South Africa, not so the Zulu with all his fine physique."

"So we are to fight with arms anyhow?" the friend finally asked.

"Not anyhow," replied Gandhiji. "Even violence has its code of ethics. For instance, to butcher helpless old men, women and children is not bravery but rank cowardice. Chivalry requires that they should be protected even at the cost of one's life. The history of early Islam is replete with such instances of chivalry and Islam is all the stronger for them."

Bravery or Brutality?

"Would you permit the Hindus to take the offensive?"

"The people of Bihar did and brought disgrace upon themselves and India. They have set the clock of India's independence backward. I have a right to speak about Bihar. In a sense I feel closer to Bihar than to Bengal as fortune enabled me to give a striking demonstration of the non-violence technique in Champaran. I have heard it said that the retaliation in Bihar has 'cooled' the Muslims down. They mean it has cowed them down for the time being. They forget that two can play at a game. Bihar has forged a link in the chain of our slavery. If the

Bihar performance is repeated or if the Bihar mentality does not mend, you may note down my words in your diary: *Before long India will pass under the yoke of the Big Three with one of them probably as the mandatory power. The independence of India is today at stake in Bengal and Bihar.* The British Government entrusted the Congress with power not because they are in love with the Congress but because they had faith that the Congress would use it wisely and well, not abuse it. Today Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru finds the ground slipping from under his feet. But he won't let that happen. That is why he is in Bihar. He has said he is going to stay there as long as it may be necessary."

"Biharis have behaved as cowards," he added with deep anguish. "Use your arms well, if you must. Do not ill-use them. Bihar has not used its arms well. If the Biharis wanted to retaliate, they could have gone to Noakhali and died to a man. But for a thousand Hindus to fall upon a handful of Mussalmans — men, women and children — living in their midst is no retaliation but just brutality. It is the privilege of arms to protect the weak and helpless. The best succour that Bihar could have given to the Hindus of East Bengal would have been to guarantee with their own lives the absolute safety of the Muslim population living in their midst. Their example would have told. And I have faith that they will still do so with due repentance when the present madness has passed away. Anyway that is the price I have put upon my life, if they want me to live. Here ends the first lesson."

Kazirkhil, 18-11-'46
Harijan, 1-12-1946

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A LETTER FROM GANDHIJI

In the course of a letter to Shri Naraindas Gandhi of Rajkot, Gandhiji writes :

"I have reverted to my usual diet and so there is no cause for worry. As a matter of fact, when a man leads a thoughtful life, there is no room for worry. My present mission is the most complicated and difficult one of my life. I can sing with cent per cent truth :

'The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.'

"I never experienced such darkness in my life before. The night seems to be pretty long. The only consolation is that I feel neither baffled, nor disappointed. I am prepared for any eventuality. 'Do or Die' has to be put to test here. 'Do' here means Hindus and Mussalmans should learn to live together in peace and amity. Otherwise, I should die in the attempt. It is really a difficult task. God's will be done.

With blessings,

5-12-'46 Bapu".

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)
Harijan, 5-1-1947

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AT SHRIRAMPUR

"We believe your attempt is to raise humanity from the lowest level. But we are sceptical as to whether you will succeed," thus spoke a friend who paid Gandhiji a visit the other day at Shrirampur with a party of co-workers from Calcutta.

"I myself am sceptical about it," replied Gandhiji. "I may succeed, I can perish in the attempt. Success or failure is not the final test."

"You are right," the interviewer remarked.

"And attempt up to the last is the only real test," added Gandhiji.

The friend next asked if there was any change of mentality on the part of the authorities. Gandhiji replied that there was a change in the Government policy for the better. "But as for the change of heart, it is for you and me to make a contribution to that consummation."

The interviewer remarked that it was painful to see how listless the Hindus had become. Gandhiji replied: "It is no prerogative of the Hindus. Listlessness is common to us all. Even if I am the only one, I shall fight this listlessness that has come over the Hindus of East Bengal." He proceeded, "I have not come here to do a good turn to this community or that. I have come to do a good turn to myself. Non-violence is not meant to be practised by the individual only. It can be and has to be practised by society as a whole. I have come to test that for myself in Noakhali. Has my *ahimsa* become bankrupt? If I fail here, it won't be any proof that the theory is wrong. It will simply mean that my *sadhana* has been imperfect, that there is some fault somewhere in my technique."

Turning again to the Noakhali situation the friend proceeded: "If the League leaders were to take the Noakhali situation as seriously as you and Jawaharlal took Bihar, order will be restored in a day." Gandhiji replied that to make such comparisons was to degrade oneself. What was called for was self-

introspection and more self-introspection. He proceeded with the same warmth, "I have come here not only to speak to the Mussalmans but to the Hindus as well. Why are they such cowards? The Harijans, the Namashudras have been relatively better so far as courage and physical prowess is concerned. They are brave. But the other Hindus must shed utterly the caste distinctions. If this calamity would open the eyes of the Hindus and result in eradicating untouchability, root and branch, it will have served a good purpose."

Narrating his earlier experiences in India he recalled how during the Champaran Satyagraha, in Rajendra Babu's absence, he could only sit in the outhouse in Rajendra Babu's house and how Rajendra Babu's servant would not let the speaker bathe at the well. Things had improved, but much more remained to be done. The visitor agreed that Hinduism had still to go a long way to eradicate the evil.

Talking of forced conversions in Noakhali the interviewer remarked that unless those who had been converted were brought back to the Hindu fold quickly, the cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims may become permanent. Gandhiji admitted the force of the argument. "Many had returned. But all must be. I have of course, always believed in the principle of religious tolerance. But I have even gone further. I have advanced from tolerance to equal respect for all religions. All religions are branches of the same mighty tree, but I must not change over from one branch to another for the sake of expediency. By doing so, I cut the branch on which I am sitting. Therefore, I always feel the change-over from one religion to another very keenly, unless it is a case of spontaneous urge, a result of inner growth. Such conversions by their very nature cannot be on a mass scale and never to save one's life or property or for temporal gain."

He narrated his meeting with a South Indian Bishop who was a Harijan converted to Christianity and retained all his original weaknesses in spite of the change of religion. He had told the late Shri Charlie Andrews that to his mind he was no bishop at all.

"There is no end to the monstrosities that have been committed here and that too in the name of religion. It is enough to

fill one with blank despair," remarked the friend. "I have met human monsters from my early youth," replied Gandhiji. "I have found that even they are not beyond redemption, if we know how to touch the right chord in their soul." And he cited two instances within his recent experience of the milk of human kindness welling up in hard-boiled sun-baked functionaries at the sight of stark human misery and devastation.

"The whole thing is so ghastly. You do not need to exaggerate it," he remarked. "I have told the authorities, I do not care for numbers. Has a single case of abduction, rape, forcible marriage, or forcible conversion occurred ? If so, it is enough for me. It is admitted that such things have happened."

"What about the rescue of abducted women ?" was the next question. It was complained that as soon as information was received about such cases and the rescue party with the military police set out on their assignment, the miscreants received intimation and removed the victim to some other place.

"I have told our people," replied Gandhiji, "do not depend on military and the police help. You have to uphold democracy, and democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible. You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another. Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the Government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the electorate through Satyagraha if necessary. That is democracy. Whether it is Bihar or Bengal, the people have to be brave and stand on their legs. I want every one to die at his post like a brave man and not to leave his home or his village."

One of the interviewers remarked that Bengal was being used as a pawn on the political chessboard. "No," replied Gandhiji. "Bengal is in the forefront today because Bengal is Bengal. It is Bengal that produced Tagore and Bankim Chandra. It was here that the heroes of the Chittagong Armoury Raid were born, however misguided their action might have been in my eyes. No, you must understand it. If Bengal plays the game, it will solve all India's problem. That is why I have made myself a Bengali. Why should there be cowardice in the Bengal of such men ?"

"Yes," remarked the visitor, "when I see these desecrated places of worship, I ask, why did not every man, woman and child of the house die there before those places were touched ?"

"If they had done that," resumed Gandhiji, "you would not have required any other help. Today Noakhali is bereft of its leading men. They refused to take the risk and have left their hearths and homes. Poor Manoranjan Babu is in a fix. Whom is he to put on the Peace Committees ? I have told him the common man must rise to fill the vacuum. There is no such thing as a vacuum in nature. Nature abhors it. Let him write to them, I have told him. If they come back, well and good. Otherwise, the common man must come forward. It is his day."

"Mahatmaji, tell us in one word," said another member of the party, "whether it is war or peace ? Peace Committees or War Committees ?"

"Peace Committees," replied Gandhiji. "War results when peace fails. Our effort must always be directed towards peace. But it must be peace with honour and a fair security for life and property. On these two conditions alone will the refugees return. Of course, if they develop enough courage, they will return without any safeguard. Today I have suggested one Hindu and one Muslim standing surety for each village. If the people have the requisite courage, they would depend on none but God and their own strength of spirit for their defence. If they did that, all the *goondas* in Noakhali will feel the change in the atmosphere and behave decently. I know what I am saying. I come from Kathiawad, a province notorious for its bandits. I know that they are not beyond redemption. Nor do I believe that *goondas* are responsible for all that has happened."

A suggestion was next made that they should have only Muslims on the Peace Committees as the Hindus had played no part in breaking the peace.

"No," replied Gandhiji. "The Hindus must be there to play their part, else the Peace Committees will be a farce."

"Was it not possible to control Bihar with non-violence ?" was the last question put by the friend.

"Yes," replied Gandhiji. "But Bihar has been having a lesson in organized violence since 1942 and before. Our weak-

ness for the *goondas* rose to the highest in 1942. I know the merits of 1942. The people were not cowed down. But all the same I cannot shut my eyes to our mistakes. We have to learn to do better."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46
Harijan, 12-1-1947

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"DO OR DIE" AT WORK

"Come to me when you are well and I shall further explain the meaning of 'Do or Die'," wrote Gandhiji in his final note which he sent to me during my initial illness. Accordingly I went to Shrirampur as soon as I could leave my bed. That day, in a heart-to-heart talk—it was thinking aloud on his part rather than a 'talk'—he poured out the whole of his mind. In spite of his exhortations to the contrary, the exodus of refugees from East Bengal continued. Everywhere there was a demand for more and more military and police protection. He, on the contrary, had asked them not to rely on the police or the military at all for their protection if they valued independence. What was the substitute for police and military protection? He had presented to them the *ahimsa* of the strong. It was a novel suggestion on his part and it only mystified them. He did not blame them for it, for he had yet to make it good in his own case. "Have faith and a heart that staggers not. And if then as Jesus has said you say to a mountain, 'Remove thyself into the sea,' it shall so happen," a friend had remarked to him sometime back. Had he that faith? He had come to live all alone in a devastated village but had not succeeded even in completely stripping himself of all company as he would have liked to do. He wanted to put his faith in God to test. If He wanted to get some work out of him, He would surely see him through all vicissitudes. Why should he then be afraid of death?

Further outlining his plans, he mentioned that as soon as he had recouped sufficiently and the water in the rice fields dried up, he proposed to walk from village to village and knock at every door to deliver his message of fearlessness to the people.

He would not return to the village from which he started. Thus he would share the life of the villager.

The late Mahadev Desai used often to remark to me in the course of intimate exchanges of confidence, "Take care of him, he is one day going to emulate Tolstoy and venture forth into the storm alone, giving all of us the slip." And lo, and behold, his prophecy has nearly come true.

At meal time Prof. Amiya Chakravarty of the Calcutta University, who had come to him on a visit, asked him the question as to what should be the technique for approaching wrongdoers so that their resistance should be dissolved. "The chief difficulty with the callous perpetrators of crime is," Dr. Chakravarty remarked, "that they are not only unrepentant but defiant and even jubilant over their misdeeds."

"Yes, they have their own reason to be jubilant and the only way to meet their attitude is not to succumb to it but to live in their midst and retain one's sense of truth. Goodness must be joined with knowledge. Mere goodness is not of much use as I have found in life. One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character. One must know, in a crucial situation, when to speak and when to be silent, when to act and when to refrain. Action and non-action in these circumstances become identical instead of being contradictory."

"I am groping for light," he added. "I am surrounded by darkness — but I must act or refrain as guided by truth. I find that I have not the patience and the technique needed in these tragic circumstances, — suffering and evil often overwhelm me and I stew in my own juice. Therefore, I have told my friends that they should bear with me and work or refrain as guided by wisdom which is now utterly demanded of us."

"The new basis," continued Gandhiji, "has to be built here in the villages where the Hindus and the Muslims have lived and suffered together on the land of their forefathers and must live together in the future. For the time being I have become a Bengali and a Noakhali man. I have come to live and share their task, to cement the two together or to perish in the attempt. I am in the midst of a raging fire and will stay here till it is put out. For this reason, I do not want to leave these

parts. Life must be made livable for the sorely afflicted men and women. The work of organization must go on and the physical as well as moral rescue achieved."

Dr. Chakravarty next suggested that the reports from Gandhiji's associates who are now working separately in the different villages should be collected and collated so that fellow-workers could gain new light on the technique of the non-violence of the strong that was being evolved and experimented with in East Bengal. Gandhiji replied that the time for it was not yet. "They have gone with my best wishes but to an atmosphere which is still unhelpful. They are following not a beaten path but a trackless route. Their work lies in the midst of a sullen population. They do not know the language and are not familiar with local problems.

"I myself don't know what the next step is and cannot guide them. They are unable to send reports now. If I made a chart for them, they would be able to keep a log book. Even the great Thakkar Bapa, as old as myself, a seasoned worker and utterly selfless, is working away without knowing what he is doing — a thing he has never done before in his life. But I am hopeful that order will come out of what is for us the necessary chaos. Then what you wish, and I also, will be forthcoming and will be a most valuable record for future workers."

"That is what all our people feel and also workers abroad. Noakhali has now become a laboratory where a crucial test is being made; the remedy will apply to situations all the world over where disputes arise between communities and nationalities and a new technique is needed for peaceful adjustment," said Dr. Chakravarty.

"From London too I have heard to the same effect," Gandhiji replied. "People are interested in what happens in Noakhali. I feel that my responsibility is great and that our work has to ring true."

"That Bengal should be chosen for this great task, that you should have made this your centre," finally remarked Dr. Chakravarty, "is to us, a supreme privilege though people have suffered and are suffering beyond description. The whole of Bengal is conscious of your arrival and of the fact that you have

come to live and work with the suffering men and women who need you so much at this hour."

"For me," replied Gandhiji, "if this thing is pulled through, it will be the crowning act of my life. I had to come down to the soil and to the people of East Bengal. The first person to whom I mentioned this was Jawaharlal. Without a moment's hesitation he replied: 'Yes, your place is there. Although we need you so much here, we need you more in Noakhali.' I asked him, 'When?' 'As soon as you feel like it,' he replied. In two days I started."

When I saw him a week later his only remark was: "I am still groping." In a note to me he poured out all the pent-up anguish of his soul. "I see I have not the knack. I have not yet quite found the key to *ahimsa*. Here I am out to perform a stupendous *yagna* but my unfitness for the task is being demonstrated at every step. There can, however, be no running away. And where can I run away? Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough if we do our part well. I am leaving no stone unturned. Ours is but to strive. In the end it will be as He wishes."

To another friend he remarked: "I don't want to return from Bengal in a defeatist way. I would rather die, if need be, at the hands of an assassin. But I do not want to court it, much less wish it." And he made it clear that he expected no less from his associates. Sometime later when I ran unawares into a nest of trouble in the course of my work from which I came out barely by the skin of my teeth, he wrote: "I have said from the very beginning that it is going to be a most hazardous task. A more hazardous task is not likely to fall to our lot in this life. Let us entirely resign ourselves to Him. His will be done.

"....You are not to rush into danger unnecessarily but unflinchingly face whatever comes in the natural course. If, in this way, all of us are wiped out, I would not mind it in the least."

For himself, he added in another note: "I am going more and more in God's hands."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46
Harijan, 12-1-1947

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SHRIRAMPUR DIARY

[This is prepared from press messages appearing in various newspapers.—Ed.]

Exchange of Population

"The question of the exchange of population is unthinkable and impracticable," said Gandhiji replying to questions put to him by Press correspondents staying with him at Shrirampur.

"This question never crossed my mind," Gandhiji said, and added: "In every Province, everyone is an Indian, be he a Hindu, a Muslim or of any other faith. It would not be otherwise even if Pakistan came in full."

Gandhiji continued: "For me any such thing will spell bankruptcy of Indian wisdom or statesmanship or both. The logical consequence of any such step is too dreadful to contemplate. Is it not that India should be artificially divided into so many religious zones?" he asked.

When asked if, in view of the unsettled situation, it was not better to adopt a migration policy, Gandhiji said, "I see nothing to warrant such a policy. It is one of despair and, therefore, to be adopted in rare cases as a last resort."

Message of Noakhali

The next question was: "You said the other day that there is no limit to your stay in East Bengal. Do you think that by confining yourself at Shrirampur you will be able to send your message of peace to other villages of Noakhali?"

Gandhiji replied: "Of course, I am not burying myself long in Shrirampur. I am not idle here. I am seeing people of the surrounding villages and others. I am studying things and regaining lost physical strength meanwhile. The idea ultimately is to go on foot, when possible and necessary, from village to village and induce the evacuees to return. This I can only do with effect when I have seen things myself. It is quite clear to me that my mere word carries very little weight. Distrust has gone too deep for exhortation."

"Darkness Lies Within Me"

Gandhiji was next asked regarding the report that he finds himself in darkness, and why and when the darkness came over him and whether he saw any release from it.

He replied : "I am afraid the report is substantial. Outside circumstances have never overwhelmed me. The reason for the present darkness lies within me. I find that my *ahimsa* does not seem to answer in the matter of Hindu-Muslim relations. This struck me forcibly when I came to learn of the events in Noakhali.

"The reported forcible conversions and the distress of the Bengali sisters touched me deeply. I could do nothing through pen or speech. I argued to myself that I must be on the scene of action and test the soundness of the doctrine which has sustained me and made life worth living.

"Was it the weapon of the weak as it was often held by my critics or was it truly the weapon of the strong ? The question arose in me when I had no ready-made solution for the distemper of which Noakhali was such a glaring symptom.

"And so setting aside all my activities, I hastened to Noakhali to find out where I stood. I know positively that *ahimsa* is a perfect instrument. If it did not answer in my hands, the imperfection was in me. My technique was at fault. I could not discover the error from a distance. Hence I came here trying to make the discovery. I must, therefore, own myself in darkness till I see light. God only knows when it will come. More I cannot say."

My Ahimsa Put to Acid Test

"I have come here to put my *ahimsa* to the acid test in this atmosphere of rank distrust and suspicion," said Gandhiji replying to a question put by the correspondent of a Madras paper.

The question was : "Don't you think that Bengal Ministers may regard your very presence here as an oppression and that whatever they do out of their own sense of justice towards the rehabilitation of the refugees may be regarded by the outside world as being done under the pressure of your presence ?"

Gandhiji replied: "In the first place your assumption is gratuitous. But if it is not, and the assumption were to accord with facts, your deduction would be correct and my stay here would not be consistent with *ahimsa*.

"I claim that I have come as much as a friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. You may recall my visit to Champaran in the very early period of my return to the motherland. I was even served with a notice to quit. The conviction against me was cancelled on the orders of the then Viceroy, and the Magistrate was instructed to permit and even help in my unofficial enquiry, with the result that I was invited to become a member of the official Sly Commission and a century old wrong was removed."

Advice to Women

Tears trickled down their faces when a number of women met Gandhiji last evening in a corner of the paddy field where he was taking his evening walk, to tell him their sad tales and the present condition in which they were living.

One old lady while wiping her tears from her eyes said: "Mahatmaji, please tell us what we are to do. How can we live in our villages when we think our life and property are unsafe and insecure?"

Gandhiji told them that since his arrival in Noakhali he had been telling them all to be fearless. If they acted accordingly and were fearless in all their work, they could live in peace. Pointing his hand towards the sky, he said, "Believe in Him. Pray and fear Him alone, and none in this world."

Advice to Europe

"The people of Europe are sure to perish if they continue to be violent," said Gandhiji in reply to questions put to him by Monsieur Raymond Cartier, a French journalist who paid a visit to the Shrirampur cottage this afternoon.

M. Raymond asked, "We who are children of violence in Europe, how do you expect us to become non-violent?"

In reply, Gandhiji said, what had happened in Europe was that Hitlerism had only been destroyed by super-Hitlerism and this chain was endless. It would go on like that.

M. Raymond asked if the remedy lay in a new form of education. Gandhiji said education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world. He referred to Aldous Huxley, who, he observed, represented a new type of thought which was working in the mind of Europe today. It might be in a minority today but if Europe was to save itself from suicide something along the lines of non-violence had to be adopted.

Survival of Small Nations

Asked as to how it would be possible to destroy Hitlerism by non-violence, Gandhiji said that was what we had to find out. Otherwise, if one depended upon superior violence in order to destroy violence of the Hitlerian type, then small nations would have hardly any chance of survival. It was only when a nation individually refused to be beaten by Hitlerism or any combination of forces of violence, and stuck to its post at the cost of its life, but not at the cost of its honour, that it had a chance of survival. So that non-violence alone was the only guarantee of protection against the heaviest odds. Unless we could develop this courage and this type of resistance, democracy could never survive.

Advice to Refugees

The following is the authorized version according to the A. P. I. of Gandhiji's prayer speech on December 21.

He began by saying that he held very strong views on the question of charity. It was wrong both to accept as well as to offer anyone a free gift. In our land irreligion often masqueraded in the name of religion. India was said to have a contingent of 56 lakhs of religious mendicants, not many of whom could be considered worthy in any sense. Even the hateful custom of untouchability had been given the sanction of religion in this land of sorrow.

The problem of relief and rehabilitation, Gandhiji went on to say, had become a serious one. People from all over India were eager to help the afflicted inhabitants of Noakhali with money or free gifts of all kinds, and there was a chance that the

latter might slip into a mentality of willing dependence on public charity. This had to be combated as much as the self-complacence of those who might feel they were acquiring religious merit through charitable gifts.

Referring to the attitude which the Government should exercise with regard to the refugees in comparison with that held by public charitable bodies, Gandhiji proceeded to explain that it was true that people had gathered in the refugees' camps for no fault of theirs. Their homes had been burnt and they were without shelter; others had been robbed of all their belongings although their cottages might still be standing, while a third group had deserted their homes mainly from a feeling of insecurity. It should be the object of the Government to deal with each case on its merits and help the people to return home with a feeling of security.

Before necessary conditions were created, it would not be right for the authorities to stop rations unless the evacuees went back home with their whole families. If the evacuees were expected to brave hardships and perhaps even death in order to reinstate themselves in their homes, then there would be no need of a state ; it would be a condition of enlightened anarchy where every man would be able to protect himself by his own strength in the face of the greatest danger. But as things stood today, much of the necessary work of social services had to be conducted by Governmental organizations.

Adequate Protection Must be Given

Adequate protection had to be given and an atmosphere created where the people might once more pursue their life's work in peace. So long as the conditions were not forthcoming arrangements for relief had to continue.

But the case of public charitable societies stood on an entirely different footing. Gandhiji held it was wrong for any man to live on public doles. Whilst the South African Satyagraha was going on, large sums of money were donated to cover the expenses of the Satyagrahis. The Tolstoy Farm near Lawley in the Transvaal was established to accommodate the families and dependents of Satyagrahis who worked to the best of their ability against their upkeep. Consequently, the Satyagraha

organization was able to refund large sums of money at the end of the campaign.

In accordance with the same principles the charitable institutions now working here should plainly tell the people that everyone should deem it a dishonour to eat a single meal without honest labour. If we could shed the aversion to labour and adapt ourselves to unexpected changes of fortune, we would go a long way towards the acquisition of fearlessness and thus towards an upliftment of our national character.

He would venture to tell the refugees that whether they were poor or rich, they should say to the authorities that they would consider it below human dignity to accept doles from the Government. Poor or rich had nothing left to them. They were in need of food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance. They had a claim upon the State for providing these vital necessities of life. But they would be robbing society if they accepted this aid without each healthy man, woman, boy or girl, labouring to the extent of his or her ability, and therefore he would like the Government to provide such useful work for society as they were capable of doing.

Harijan, 19-1-1947

117

THE PURPOSE OF THE TOUR

[The following address which was written out by Gandhiji in Hindustani for being read to the audience at prayer time on 6th January — it being his day of silence — has been rendered in English from its Bengali version by Shri Nirmal Kumar Bose. It was published in the Bengali edition of the *Harijan* of the 12th instant.

— Mg. Ed.]

As my weekly silence will not break before 7 p.m., I have written out my address. I pray to God, and request you all to join with me in praying that the tour which I commenced yesterday should go on uninterrupted till the end and be successful in achieving its purpose. But before praying, you should know that purpose. I have only one object in view and it is a clear

one; namely, that God should purify the hearts of Hindus and Muslims, and the two communities should be free from suspicion and fear towards each other. Please join with me in this prayer and say that God is the Lord of us both and that He may give us success.

You might well ask me why it is necessary to undertake a tour for this purpose; or how can one, who is not pure in heart himself, ask others to become pure; or how can one, who himself is subject to fear, give courage to others; one, who himself moves under armed escort, call upon others to cast away their arms. All these questions are relevant and have been put to me.

My answer is that during my tour I wish to assure the villagers to the best of my capacity that I do not bear the least ill-will towards any. I can prove this only by living and moving among those who distrust me. I admit that the third question is a little difficult for me to answer ; for I do happen to be moving under armed protection, I am surrounded by armed police and military keenly alert to guard me from all danger. I am helpless in the matter as it is arranged by the Government which being responsible to the people feels that it is their duty to keep me guarded by the police and the military. How can I prevent them from doing so ? Under the circumstances, I can declare only in words that I own no protector but God. I do not know whether you will believe my statement. God alone knows the mind of a person; and the duty of a man of God is to act as he is directed by his inner voice. I claim that I act accordingly.

You might here ask that there was at least no reason for the Sikhs to go with me. They have not been posted by the Government. Let me inform you, first, that they have obtained the permission of the Government for going with me. They have not come here to create quarrels. In testimony, they have come without their usual *kirpans*. They have come to render service to both the communities impartially. The first lesson which the Netaji taught to the soldiers of his Indian National Army was that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis etc., should all regard India as their common motherland, and they should all substantiate their unity by working for her jointly. The Sikhs here wish to serve both the communities under my guidance. How— on what ground—can I send away such friends ? They have

been giving me valuable assistance and that not for making a public show thereof, but in a spirit of genuine service. If I refused that service, I should fall in my own estimate and prove myself a coward. I request you, too, to trust these people, regard them as your brethren and accept their services. They are capable of rendering much help and have plenty of experience of this kind of work. God has blessed them with physical strength and also faith.

If I find that what I have said about them was incorrect, they would go back. If, on the other hand, I am keeping them with an ulterior motive, it will prove to be my own ruin, besides making my experiment a failure.

The particular object lessons, which I propose to give you during my tour, are how you can keep the village water and yourself clean; what use you can properly make of the earth, which our bodies are made of; how you can obtain the life-force from the infinite sky spreading over your heads; how you can reinforce your vital-energy from the air which surrounds you; and how you can make proper use of the sun-light. This is to say that I shall try to teach you how we can convert our impoverished country into a land of gold by making the right use of the various elements around us. I pray to God that I may succeed in serving you in the manner set forth above.

Harijan, 26-1-1947

118

THE VITAL TEST

Gandhiji in his address said that a friend had been telling him that his reference to "darkness" surrounding him was very confusing to many. The friend thought that people at a distance saw light shimmering through his plan, and there was enough proof that confidence was slowly returning in that affected area.

Gandhiji said he would tell this friend and others who thought like him that they had misunderstood him to some extent. The darkness in which he was surrounded was of a character the like of which had never faced him before. It was indeed now a vital test that his *ahimsa* was passing through. He would not be able to say that he had come out successful until the object was reached.

It was true that the night was darkest before the dawn. Although friends at a distance could see glimpses of the breaking dawn he himself felt that he was surrounded in complete darkness.

He said that many years ago a friend of his used to carry Patanjali's *Yogasutra* constantly in his pocket. Although Gandhiji did not know Sanskrit yet the friend would often come to him to consult about the meaning of some of the *sutras*. In one of the *sutras* it was stated that when *ahimsa* had been fully established it would completely liquidate the forces of enmity and evil in the neighbourhood. Gandhiji felt that the stage had not been reached in the neighbourhood about him, and this led him to infer that his *ahimsa* had not yet succeeded in the present test.

That was the reason why he was saying that there was still darkness all round him.

He said that his plan was to proceed with the least number of companions on his march, and that he would prefer to stay in the houses of Muslim friends. He had reduced his needs and these could be met even by the poorest villagers. He would like

to go absolutely unprotected if it was to prove that in his heart he had nothing but love and friendship for the Muslims.

28-12-'46
Harijan, 26-1-1947

119

THE NEW EXPERIMENT

Addressing his prayer gathering in Chandipur Gandhiji said that his mission was for the establishment of friendship between the sister communities living there and not to organize any one community against the rest. So long the non-violence which had been practised was the non-violence of the weak but the new experiment in which he had been engaged there was the non-violence of the strong. If it were to be successful it should succeed in creating a moral atmosphere helpful to both the communities round him. Only when the Hindus and Muslims shed their fear and mutual suspicion could real unity of heart come. There should not be any cause for hostility because their hearts were one.

Gandhiji asked all Hindus and Muslims to devote themselves to the noble task of reorganizing the village life and in improving their economic condition. Through cottage industries they would find themselves working together in the common task, and unity would thereby grow among them. He exhorted the audience to carry on his eighteen-point constructive work which would spread like a life-giving influence over the entire countryside.

28-12-'46
Harijan, 26-1-1947

120

FORCIBLE CONVERSIONS

Gandhiji spoke about conversions during his prayer speech at Jagatpur. He said he had been hearing for some time — and more insistently since Friday — that if the Muslims asked the Hindus to accept Islam, if they wanted to save themselves or their property and if the latter responded, there was no compulsion. Gandhiji said he was not concerned for a moment with the truth or otherwise of that statement. What he wanted to say was that this was acceptance of Islam under the threat of force.

Gandhiji said that he had carefully studied, as much as he could in his busy life, Islam's history written by Muslim divines and he had not found a single passage in condonation of forcible conversion. Real conversion proceeded from the heart and a heart conversion was impossible without an intelligent grasp of one's own faith and that recommended for adoption.

Concluding Gandhiji said that he was not going to be satisfied without a heart understanding between the two communities and this was not possible unless the Hindus and the Muslims were prepared to respect each other's religions, leaving the process of conversion absolutely free and voluntary.

Harijan, 2-2-1947

121

BROTHERLINESS

On the previous evening 17-1-'47 Gandhiji had quoted in his prayer speech Mr. Jinnah's advice that women should rapidly be rescued from illiteracy. But Gandhiji said that that was not enough. Was the condition of the literate men any better for their literacy ? Were they not, he asked, subject to the passing fashions of the political world ? Germany, which had lain so long under Hitler, proved what he meant; as all knew it was in a sorry plight today. It was not literacy or learning which made a man, but education for real life. What did it matter, questioned Gandhiji, if they knew everything but did not know how to live in brotherliness with their neighbours ?

Gandhiji continued that if some people had committed grievous mistakes in their dealings with their neighbours, they should repent and ask the pardon of God. If He granted it but the world did not, even then it did not matter to a man who had learnt to depend on God. Such punishment nobly borne served to elevate a man. Gandhiji then said that in a book of sayings of the Prophet he had found that a man should never leave an error uncorrected. If they did, they would be hauled up on the Day of Judgment and find no favour in the eyes of God.

It was not enough that they acquired the art of reading, writing etc., but it was necessary that they should learn the art of living on friendly terms with their neighbours. They should rescue the womenfolk, who formed half their numbers, from the thraldom of ignorance and superstition. Men should live in co-operation and work for the common good. For this, they should not look up to political parties for direction, but to their own souls or God.

Personally, Gandhiji said, he had addressed himself wholly to that task. He would not leave this part of the country alive if the work remained unaccomplished. If he succeeded in overcoming the distrust of his Muslim brethren, and in establishing the fact that, after all, it was the daily things of life such as he had mentioned which mattered most, then its effect would be

felt not merely in this part of the country but over the whole of India; and as such might even deeply affect the future peace of the world.

Harijan, 2-2-1947

122

THE MODERN BUDDHA ?

A question was put to Gandhiji at Narayanpur on the 15th January: Why cannot the apostle of non-violence, the modern Buddha, stop internecine war and blood-bath in the country ?

Gandhiji, replying to this question, acquitted himself from the charge of being the modern Buddha. He was and claimed to be a simple man having extensive experience at his back, but on that account claimed to be no better than any member of the audience. He was an equal servant of both the communities or all the communities of India. He wished he had the power to stop 'internecine war' and consequent 'blood-bath'. Buddha or the prophets that followed him had gone the way they went in order to stop wars. The fact that he could not do so was proof positive that he had no superior power at his back. It was true that he swore by non-violence and so he had come to Noakhali in order to test the power of his non-violence. As he had repeatedly said ever since his arrival in Bengal, he had no desire to leave Bengal unless both the communities showed by their action that they were like blood-brothers living together in perfect peace and amity.

Gandhiji also dealt with a question that was raised by the Muslim friends who had seen him before the prayer meeting. They had asked him how he expected friendly relations between the two communities when the Hindus agitated for the arrest and trial of those who were guilty of murders, arson and loot during the disturbances. The speaker confessed that he did not like these complaints. But he sympathized with the complainants so long as the wrong-doers avoided arrest and trial and so long as Muslim opinion in Noakhali did not insist upon guilty parties disclosing themselves. He would be glad to see Muslim opinion working actively to bring the offenders not before the

courts of justice but before the court of public opinion. Let the offenders show contrition and let them return the looted property. Let them also show to those against whom offences were committed that they need fear no molestation, that the days of frenzy were over. Muslim public opinion should be such as to guarantee that miscreants would not dare to offend against any individual, and only then Hindus could be asked to return safely to their villages. The speaker was sure that such purging before the court of public opinion was infinitely superior to a trial before a court of law. What was wanted was not vengeance but reformation.

Harijan, 9-2-1947.

123

ON TRUSTEESHIP

Gandhiji answered some questions addressed to him and arising out of his remarks on trusteeship.

Q. Is it possible to defend by means of non-violence anything which can only be gained through violence ?

A. What was gained by violence could not only not be defended by non-violence but the latter required the abandonment of ill-gotten gains.

Q. Is the accumulation of capital possible except through violence whether open or tacit ?

A. Such accumulation by private persons was impossible except through violent means, but accumulation by the State in a non-violent society was not only possible, it was desirable and inevitable.

Q. Whether a man accumulates material or moral wealth he does so only through the help or co-operation of other members of society. Has he then the moral right to use any of it mainly for personal advantage ?

A. No, he has no moral right.

Q. How would the successor of a trustee be determined ? Will he only have the right of proposing a name, the right of finalization being vested in the State ?

A. Choice should be given to the original owner who became the first trustee, but the choice must be finalized by the State. Such arrangement puts a check on the State as well as the individual.

Q. When the replacement of private by public property thus takes place through the operation of the theory of trusteeship, will the ownership vest in the State, which is an instrument of violence, or in associations of a voluntary character like village communes and municipalities, which may of course derive their final authority from State-made laws ?

A. That question involved some confusion of thought. Legal ownership in the transformed condition vested in the trustee, not in the State. It was to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship came into play retaining for the society the ability of the original owner in his own right. Nor is it true that the State must always be based on violence. It might be so in theory but the practice of the theory demanded a State which would for the most part be based on non-violence.

Satgharia (Noakhali), 2-2-'47
Harijan, 16-2-1947

124

LEGALIZED TRUSTEESHIP

Q. You have asked rich men to be trustees. Is it implied that they should give up private ownership in their property and create out of it a trust valid in the eyes of the law and managed democratically ? How will the successor of the present incumbent be determined on his demise ?

In answer Gandhiji said that he adhered to the position taken by him years ago that everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore it was for His people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion he became a trustee of that portion for God's people.

God who was all-powerful had no need to store. He created from day to day; hence men also should in theory live from

day to day and not stock things. If this truth was imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and trusteeship would become a legalized institution. He wished it became a gift from India to the world. Then there would be no exploitation and no reserves as in Australia and other countries for White men and their posterity. In these distinctions lay the seed of a war more virulent than the last two. As to the successor, the trustee in office would have the right to nominate his successor subject to legal sanction.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

125

WITH A LANDHOLDER

"Where shall we stand when India is independent?" asked a friend representing the landholders' interests, the other day during his visit to Gandhiji.

"You will be as free as any scavenger," replied Gandhiji, "but whether you will be able to retain all the privileges which you are enjoying under the British Government is a question you can answer for yourself."

"We realize," proceeded the friend, "that we shall secure our salvation at the hands of Indian leaders, not the British Government."

"Everybody believes that today," said Gandhiji. "Even the British Government feel that they cannot do otherwise than to leave India to settle her own affairs."

"The landholders," resumed the friend, "derived their charter of rights and privileges from the Permanent Settlement of 1802, which was of the nature of a contract between the British and the *Zamindars*, but they are quite willing to negotiate an agreement with the leaders of the country on the future of their rights."

"Being a non-violent man by nature," replied Gandhiji, "I cannot countenance the usurpation of anybody's just rights. But some of the extraordinary privileges that pass muster under British rule are themselves in the nature of an usurpation.

The history of British rule is a history of usurpation. Those who helped the British Government in this process got certain rights as a reward for their services. These cannot be insisted upon."

"Many ancient *Zamindaris* existed long before the advent of the British and were exercising sovereign power," rejoined the friend, "as a product of the indigenous social and economic system of long standing. Don't you think they have a title to continue their existence? They are trying their best to discharge a philanthropic function in the shape of founding educational and social institutions."

"Anything that is ancient and consistent with moral values has a title to be retained," answered Gandhiji. "*Per contra* anything that does not conform to moral values has to go. Wrong has no prescriptive right to exist merely because it is of a long standing. If those who are on your *Zamindaris* feel one with you and you with them, like members of a family, you have nothing to fear from anybody."

The friend proceeded, "We want even-handed justice. We have no objection to an Independent India Government abolishing all manner of vested interests. But let there be no discrimination against the *Zamindars* especially. We only want a conciliatory gesture, an assurance that you won't wipe us out as a class, without giving us a sporting chance to vindicate our existence."

"A just man," replied Gandhiji "need have no fear of any kind from an Independent India. India may, however, fall into unjust hands. Every Congressman is not an angel nor is everyone who is not a Congressman a devil. Let us hope that, if Congress comes into power, it will try to be more than just. Otherwise all the good that it might have done would disappear in the twinkling of an eye."

"I do not deny that there are bad boys amongst us. But you can cure us. We only wish that nothing should be done without consulting us."

"That goes without saying," replied Gandhiji.

New Delhi, 23-4-'46
Harijan, 28-4-1946

126

REDUCTION OF LANDLORD'S SHARE

Q. There is a movement for reducing the share of the owner from half to one-third of the agricultural produce. What is your opinion about this ?

Gandhiji welcomed the move for the reduction of the landlord's share from half to one-third. He thought the move was substantial. The land belonged to the Lord of us all and therefore to the worker on it. But till that ideal state of things came about, the movement towards the reduction of the landlord's portion was in the right direction.

But he warned the movers against the use of compulsion or violence. He could have no part or share in violence. It was a reform to be brought about only by the cultivation of healthy public opinion. The reformers must have patience. He believed implicitly in the aphorism : 'As the end so the means.' In his opinion it was pernicious to hold that so long as the end was good any means, however violent or unjust, were justified. Many movements had come to grief by reliance on doubtful means.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

127

INTELLECTUAL AND MANUAL WORK

Q. Why should we insist on a Rabindranath or Raman earning his bread by manual labour ? Is it not sheer wastage ? Why should not brain workers be considered on a par with manual workers, for both of them perform useful social work ?

A. Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation. It will serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output. I venture to say that in ancient times Brahmins worked with their body as with their mind. But even if they did not, body labour was a proved necessity at the present time. In this connection I would refer to the life of Tolstoy and how he made famous the theory of Bread Labour first propounded in his country by the Russian peasant Bondaref.

Dharmapur (Noakhali), 6-2-'47
Harijan, 23-2-1947

128

EXPANSIVE RELIGION

Addressing the prayer meeting Gandhiji at the outset dealt with a question that was raised by some Muslim friends. Did he want Muslims to attend his prayer meetings ? The reply was that he wanted neither the Muslims nor the Hindus to attend the prayer meetings. If the questioner meant to ask whether he would like the Muslims to attend such meetings he had no hesitation in saying that he would certainly like them to attend. What was more, numerous Muslims had attended his prayer meetings which had gone on for years. The next question was whether he, the speaker, did not consider wrong for him, a non-Muslim, to recite anything from the *Quran* or to couple Rama and Krishna with Rahim and Karim. They said it offended Muslim ears. The speaker replied that the

objection gave him a painful surprise. He thought that the objection betrayed narrowness of mind. They should know that he had introduced the recital from the *Quran* through Bibi Raihana Tyabjee, a devoted Muslim with a religious mind. She had no political motive behind the proposal. He was no *avatar*-man as was suggested. He claimed to be a man of God humbler than the humblest man or woman. His object ever was to make Muslims better Muslims, Hindus better Hindus, Christians better Christians, Parsis better Parsis. He never invited anybody to change his or her religion. He had thought, therefore, that the questioners would be glad to find that his religion was so expansive as to include readings from the religious scriptures of the world.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

129

PROSECUTION OF CRIMINALS

Some friends had said to Gandhiji that all prosecutions, initiated by the Hindus against the Muslim offenders, interfered with the progress of the peace mission between the two. It surprised him. What had peace between gentlemen to do with the prosecution of criminals. He could understand the objection if it meant that false prosecutions should be withdrawn. He would be whole-heartedly with the objectors. He went further and said that all such persons should be brought to book as perjurers. He said also that the proper course to avoid court procedure was for the guilty persons in all humility to make an open confession of their guilt and stand the judgment of the public. He would gladly help any such movement.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

130

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Q. It has been our experience that a worker becomes power-loving after some time. How are the rest of his co-workers to keep him in check? In other words, how are we to preserve the democratic character of the organization? We have found that non-cooperation with the party in question does not help. The work of the organization itself suffers.

A. This is not your experience alone but it is almost universal. Love of power is usual in man and it often only dies with his death. Therefore, it is difficult for co-workers to keep him in check, if only because they are more likely than not to have the same human frailty; and so long as we do not know a single completely non-violent organization in the world, we cannot claim to know the utterly democratic character of an organization because, as can be definitely proved, no perfect democracy is possible without perfect non-violence at the back of it. The question would be proper if non-cooperation was violent as it often, if not invariably, is. Claiming to know somewhat from experience the non-violent character of non-cooperation, I suggest that given a good cause, non-violent non-cooperation must succeed, and no organization can suffer through offering non-violent non-cooperation. The questioner labours under the difficulty of having experience of non-cooperation, at best partially non-violent, at its worst bare-faced violence sailing under the name of non-violence. The pages of the *Harijan* and *Young India* are filled with instances of abortive non-cooperation, because of these two vital defects, non-violence being partial or totally absent. During my long experience, I also noticed that those who complain of others being ambitious of holding power are no less ambitious themselves, and when it is a question of distinguishing between half a dozen and six, it becomes a thankless task.

Q. In almost all villages there are parties and factions. When we draft local help, whether we wish it or not, we become involved in local power politics. How can we steer clear

of this difficulty? Should we try to by-pass both parties and carry on work with the help of outside workers? Our experience has been that such work becomes entirely contingent upon outside aid and crumbles down as soon as the latter is withdrawn. What should we do then to develop local initiative and foster local cooperation?

A. Alas for India that parties and factions are to be found in the villages as they are to be found in our cities. And when power politics enter our villages with less thought of the welfare of the villages and more of using them for increasing the parties' own power, this becomes a hindrance to the progress of the villagers rather than a help. I would say that whatever be the consequence, we must make use as much as possible of local help and if we are free from the taint of power politics, we are not likely to go wrong. Let us remember that the English-educated men and women from the cities have criminally neglected the villages of India which are the backbone of the country. The process of remembering our neglect will induce patience. I have never gone to a single village which is devoid of an honest worker. We fail to find him when we are not humble enough to recognize any merit in our villages. Of course, we are to steer clear of local politics, and this we shall learn to do when we accept help from all parties and no parties, wherever it is really good. I would regard it as fatal for success to by-pass villagers. As I knew this very difficulty, I have tried rigidly to observe the rule of one village, one worker, except that where he or she does not know Bengali, an interpreter's help has been given. I can only say that this system has so far answered the purpose. I must, therefore, discount your experience. I would further suggest that we have got into the vicious habit of coming to hasty conclusions. Before pronouncing such a sweeping condemnation as is implied in the sentence that 'work becomes entirely contingent upon outside aid and crumbles down as soon as the latter is withdrawn', I would go so far as to say that even a few years' experience of residence in a single village, trying to work through local workers, should not be regarded as conclusive proof that work could not be done through and by local workers. The contrary is obviously true. It now becomes unnecessary for me to examine the last sentence in detail. I can categorically say to the principal worker: 'If

you have any outside help, get rid of it. Work singly, courageously, intelligently with all the local help you can get and, if you do not succeed, blame only yourself and no one else and nothing else.'

Harijan, 2-3-1947

131

NON-VIOLENCE WITHOUT RESERVATION

Gandhiji in his post-prayer address dealt with a question which was as follows:

You have asked those provinces which have the necessary courage to frame their own constitution and then ask the British army to quit their territory as proof of the attainment of independence. What, in your opinion, should be the basis of the franchise in those free provinces of India ? Should communal electorates be replaced by functional ones in the Assemblies ? Should there be functional instead of communal representation ? Should there be joint electorates with reservation of seats for communal minorities or functional groups ? Should there be favoured representation of any group for the time being ? If so, of what group ? Should we have joint electorate, and full adult franchise ?

Gandhiji's answer was unequivocal. Even one province could frame its own constitution and enforce it, provided that it was backed not by a majority of one but by an overwhelming majority. Gandhiji held that no power on earth could resist the lovers of liberty who were ready not to kill opponents but be killed by them. This was the view that he had enunciated at one time. But today they had made considerable progress. He put a favourable interpretation on the Cabinet Mission's State Paper. So far as he could see they could not resist the declared wish of a single province. If that was true of one province, say Bengal, how much more it was for a number of provinces which the Constituent Assembly undoubtedly represented ? But he was indifferent to what the British Government said so far as India's independence was concerned. That rested with the people and no outside power. Nor was there

any question as to what India would do if the State Paper was withdrawn. India has been accustomed to life in the wilderness. When Pandit Nehru and his friends accepted office he had said that it was not a bed of roses but a bed of thorns. Their goal was liberty and liberty they would take no matter what happened.

Naturally he would speak with confidence when the people had only non-violence in view as a steadfast simple policy without reservation. If, on the other hand, they thought they could drive away the English by the sword they were vastly mistaken. They did not know the determination and courage of the English. They would not yield to the power of the sword. But they could not withstand the courage of non-violence which disdained to deal death against death. He knew no other power higher than non-violence. And if they were still without real independence, it was, he was sure, because the people had not developed sufficient non-violence. Anyway the State Paper in his opinion was in answer to the non-violent strength that India had so far developed.

If they contemplated the last war, they would plainly see that whilst the enemy powers so-called were crushed, the allied powers had won but an empty victory. Apart from the wanton destruction of human heads they had between the allies and the enemies succeeded in draining the world of its food materials and cloth. And the former seemed to be so dehumanized that they entertained the vain hope of reducing the enemies to helotry. It was a question whom to pity more — the allies or the enemies. Therefore he asked the people bravely to face the consequence whatever it was, feeling secure in the confidence born of non-violence, be it as an honest policy.

As to the franchise he swore by the franchise of all adults, males and females, above the age of twentyone or even eighteen. He would bar old men like himself. They were of no use as voters. India and the rest of the world did not belong to those who were on the point of dying. To them belonged death, life to the young. Thus he would have a bar against persons beyond a certain age, say fifty, as he would against youngsters below eighteen. Of course, he would debar lunatics and loafers. Of course, in India free, he could not contemplate communal franchise. It must be joint electorate, perhaps with reservation of

seats. Nor could he contemplate favouritism for anyone, say Muslims, Sikhs or Parsis for example. If there was to be favouritism he would single out physical lepers. They were an answer to the crimes of society. If moral lepers would ban themselves, the physical lepers would soon be extinct. And they, poor men, were so frightened of modern society that they put forth no claims. Educate them truly and they would make ideal citizens. Anyway, side by side with adult franchise or even before that he pleaded for universal education, not necessarily literary except as perhaps an aid. English education, he was convinced, had starved our minds, enervated them and never prepared them for brave citizenship. He would give them all sufficient knowledge in their rich languages of which any country would be proud. Education in the understanding of the rights of citizenship was a short term affair if they were honest and earnest.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

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SOME QUESTIONS

Q. Supposing one or the other of the provinces wishes to declare its independence, what kind of constitution would you advise them to prepare ? In 1925, you declared that in the Free India of your dreams only those would have voting rights who had contributed by manual labour to the service of the State. Do you adhere to that advice today with regard to the above provinces ?

A. Independence could be the same as for the whole of India. He adhered to what he had said in 1925 viz. that all adults above a certain age, male or female, who would contribute some body labour to the State would be entitled to the vote. Thus a simple labourer would easily be a voter whereas a millionaire or a lawyer or a merchant and the like would find it hard if they did not do some body labour for the State.

Q. If contiguous provinces in India do not declare such independence but scattered ones do so, would not the presence of the non-federating units create difficulties for the rest in the matter of common action ?

A. He saw no difficulty if the society was of his conception, that is based on non-violence. Thus supposing populous Bengal with its gifted Tagores and Suhrawardys framed a constitution based on independence, and Assam with its opium habit dreamed away life, Orissa with its skeletons had no wish, and Bihar was occupied in family slaughter, they would all three be affected and covered by Bengal. Such infectiousness was inherent in his scheme of independence which was friends to all and enemy to none. It might well be that his was a voice in the wilderness. If so, it was India's misfortune.

Q. Do you expect the constitution of the free provinces to be made so attractive that others would voluntarily be drawn into it?

A. Attractiveness was inherent in everything that was inherently good.

Q. Supposing the whole of Group A forms a common constitution, do you think provinces which are now under Group B or C will be able to join A if they so desire?

A. It went without saying that if Group A succeeded in framing a good constitution, not only would it be open to B and C to join, they would be irresistibly drawn to it.

Q. What about the States? Who will decide whether a State should join the Union or not: the present rulers or the people? If it is to be the latter then what changes would you expect to be first made in the constitutions of the present States?

A. He was a mere humble ryot but he belonged to the many crores. The *Rajahs* were nominally 640, in reality they were probably less than 100. Whatever the number was, they were so few that in an awakened India, they could only exist as servants of the ryots not in name but in actual practice. He did not share the fear underlying the question that the British would be so dishonest as to play the *Rajahs* against the ryots. That was not the note of the Cabinet Mission Paper. But why should India depend upon the British Cabinet? When India was ready, neither the British nor the *Rajahs*, nor any combination of the Powers could keep India from her destined goal, her birthright, as the Lokamanya would have said.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

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DOLES TO REFUGEES

Gandhiji in the course of his prayer speech set himself to answering the questions put to him.

You have always been against charity and have preached the doctrine that no man is free from the obligation of bread-labour. What is your advice for people who are engaged in sedentary occupations but lost their all in the last riots ? Should they migrate and try to find a place where they can go back to their old, acustomed habits of life, or should they try to remodel their life in conformity with your ideal of bread-labour for everybody ? Of what use will their special talents be in that case ?

In reply Gandhiji said that it was true that for years he had been against charity as it was understood and that he had for years preached the duty of bread-labour. In this connection he mentioned the visit he had received from the District Magistrate and Zaman Saheb along with a police officer. They wanted his opinion about giving doles to the refugees. They had already decided to put before them the work of the removal of the water hyacinth, the repair of roads, village reconstruction or straightening out their own plots of land or building on their lands. Those who did any one of these things had a perfect right to rations. He said that he liked the idea. But as a practical idealist he would not take the refugees by storm. A variety of work should be put before the people, and they should have one month's notice that if they made no choice of the occupations suggested nor did they suggest some other acceptable occupation, but declined to do any work though their bodies were fit, they would be reluctantly obliged to tell the refugees that they would not be able to give them doles after the expiry of the notice. He advised the refugees and their friends to render full co-operation to the Government in such a scheme of work. It was wrong for any citizen to expect rations without doing some physical work.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

TWO QUESTIONS

Q. The Mussalmans are boycotting the Hindus. Those Hindus who possess more land than they can till themselves are in a serious difficulty. What is your advice to them? What will they do about the surplus land which they hold but cannot till themselves, even if they take up the plough themselves?

A. In answer Gandhiji said that he had heard of the boycott and had made some remarks at previous meetings. He hoped, indeed he knew, that the boycott was not universal in Noakhali. It was probably confined to a few. Whatever the extent, he had no doubt that it was wrong and would do no good to the boycotters as it could not to those against whom it was directed. That opinion was held by him for a large number of years, say sixty. But there was a condition when he would conceive it possible, i.e. if the Muslims regarded the Hindus as their enemies and wished to avoid their presence in Noakhali. That would amount to a declaration of war from which every Indian would recoil with horror. In isolated cases, his opinion was emphatic. The Hindu under the boycott would allow his land to lie fallow like the Australians or he would sell the surplus land. What was best was that nobody should possess more than he could himself use. That was the ideal the society should strive to reach.

Q. There is certainly a peace-loving section among the Mussalmans. After your presence in their midst, have they been influenced to such an extent that they are able to assert themselves against the worst element in their own community?

A. As to this question he felt glad that the questioner admitted that there was a peace-loving section among the Muslims of Noakhali. It would be monstrous if there was not. Whether they had developed courage to oppose the bad and mischievous element in Muslim society, only the Muslim friends could reply with certainty. But he was vain enough to believe that several Muslim friends had been so affected. As for instance, the Muslim witness in Bhatialpur declared that the destroyed *mandir*

he had opened they would defend against destruction in future with their lives. There were other consoling instances he had met with during his tour.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

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IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Q. You have said that you will stay here as long as perfect peace and amity between the two communities was not established and that you will die here if necessary. Do you not think that such a long stay here will unnecessarily focus Indian and world attention on Noakhali, leading people to think that excesses still continued to be committed here, whereas on the contrary no unseemly acts have been committed by Mussalmans for sometime now?

A. No impartial observer could draw the mischievous inference from his presence. He was there as their friend and servant. His presence had certainly advertized Noakhali as a beautiful place which would be a paradise on earth if the Hindus and the Muslims lived in hearty friendship. It may be that at the end of the chapter he might be noted down as a failure who knew very little about *ahimsa*. Moreover, it was impossible for him to stay in Noakhali if the Hindus and the Muslims satisfied him that they had established hearty friendship between them. He was sorry to tell them that he had evidence to show that things were not quite as they should be.

Q. Don't you think that the dictates of non-violence and friendship to all demand withdrawal or dropping of cases against the Mussalmans?

A. He did not know that there was much non-violence in the air. Even non-violent conduct could not arrest the course of law. And non-violent conduct on the part of the frightened injured party could not operate until the culprits declared themselves and were penitent. The fact was that not only was there no penitence on their part, but they were absconding. He was averse to mass arrests. And he was for severe punish-

ment of those who were proved to have manufactured complaints.

Q. Can there be any hope of establishing Hindu-Muslim unity here in spite of the Congress-League differences which are at the root of all the troubles everywhere? Even if it is established, how long can it be expected to last?

A. He admitted that Hindu-Muslim unity could not be sustained in the face of Congress-League differences. He hoped, however, that apart from party politics, whilst there was time, the Hindus and the Muslims in Noakhali would act together as real friends. They should set an example to all India and especially to the League and the Congress. Any way, that was the mission that brought him to Noakhali. He wanted to pass his examination in pure *ahimsa*. If it was pure, it must result in establishing that friendship which he desired at heart. Therefore, if it was not established, the failure would be his. And as *ahimsa* knew no failure, he had said he would do or die in Noakhali. Let the questioner and those who thought like him help the fruition of the effort.

Q. We agree that intrinsically a movement for reducing the share of the owner from half to a third of the crop is justified. But could not the present *Tebhaga* Movement in Bengal be postponed until such time as when the affected persons can be smoothly absorbed in other occupations according to some long-term plan sponsored by the State?

We know you have said that the only way to effect such a radical transformation in society is through non-violence. But interested parties will sleep over that portion of your advice and parade your moral support to their demand and carry on the Movement in their own violent way. Hence is it not wrong for you to lend support to the Movement under the present circumstances when there is every chance of the entire middle class of Bengal being completely ruined as a result? The common villager will also suffer no less because he will also be deprived of the services now being rendered to the village economy by them.

A. In reply, Gandhiji uttered the warning that he only dealt with principles as he knew them. He had not studied the

local question. Therefore, the questioner ran the risk of his ignorance causing injustice.

He felt that the question betrayed exaggeration on the part of the questioner. There was no ruin impending for the landlord. His land was not being confiscated. His portion, which he could take even if he was in Timbuctoo, was merely to be reduced from 50% to 33%. He could see no ruin in the proposal. He was afraid they were too much obsessed by the communal question. They should rise above it and examine every problem strictly on merits. Then they would never go wrong. Therefore they should accept the moral principle underlying the demand for reduction of the owner's share and work for solid amendments in which they were likely to succeed. Let them not face confiscation rather than moderate reduction. Let them remember that for years past India had lived through confiscation. Industry after industry had been ruined and both the artisans as well as the farmers of India had been progressively reduced to poverty.

If the desired change were brought about through non-violent means, the world would not be deprived of the talents of the classes, but then the latter would not exercise them at the expense of the labourers. In the non-violent order of the future, the land would belong to the State, for had it not been said '*sabhi bhumi Gopalaki*'? Under such dispensation, there would be no waste of talents and labour. This would be impossible through violent means. It was therefore a truism to say that the utter ruin of the land-owners brought about through violence would also involve the ruin of the labourers in the end. If the landowners, therefore, acted wisely, no party would lose.

Q. Some women workers who earn part of their living by weaving mats were advised by you the other day to work on cooperative principles. Bengal's agriculture has been reduced to an uneconomic proposition through extreme fragmentation of holdings. Would you advise farmers also to adopt cooperative methods?

If so, how are they to effect this under the present system of land-ownership? Should the State make the necessary changes in the law? If the State is not ready, but the people so desire,

how are they to work through their own organizations to this end ?

A. Replying to the first part of the question, Gandhiji said that he had no doubt that the system of cooperation was far more necessary for the agriculturists than for the mat weavers. The land as he maintained belonged to the State; therefore, it yielded the largest return when it was worked cooperatively.

Let it be remembered that cooperation should be based on strict non-violence. There was no such thing as success of violent cooperation. Hitler was a forcible example of the latter. He also talked vainly of cooperation which was forced upon the people and everyone knew where Germany had been led as a result.

Gandhiji concluded by saying that it would be a sad thing if India also tried to build up the new society based on cooperation by means of violence. Good brought about through force destroyed individuality. Only when the change was effected through the persuasive power of non-violent non-cooperation, i.e. love, could the foundation of individuality be preserved and real, abiding progress be assured for the world.

Harijan, 9-3-1947

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QUESTION BOX

Q. Do you support evacuation of the Hindus from the affected areas if the League Government or the majority community agrees to give us due compensation ?

A. He had supported the proposition from the non-violent standpoint. It was applicable to all provinces whether the majority was Hindu or Muslim. What could the Government do if the majority had become so hostile that they would not tolerate the presence of the minority community ? In his opinion it would be improper for them to force the majority into submission, nor could they undertake to protect the minority at the point of the bayonet. Suppose for instance that the majority would not tolerate *Ramadhun* or the clapping (to keep time with

the chanting), would not listen to the fact that Rama was not a person but the name was synonymous with God, and that the Hindus believed in clapping, and that the Muslims would not tolerate it, he had then no hesitation in saying that the minority should evacuate if adequate compensation was paid.

Q. What should a Hindu worker do when he is being deliberately misrepresented by interested parties in Noakhali ?

A. The answer in terms of *ahimsa*, generally, would be that acts should be allowed to speak for themselves. Whilst this was good as a general proposition there were occasions when to speak and explain was a duty and not to speak would amount to a falsehood. Therefore wisdom dictated that there were some occasions when speech must accompany action. Of course there was an occasion when mere thought would take the place of speech and action. Such was the attribute of the Almighty and might be almost possible for one in a billion, but he knew no such instance.

Q. You have advised evacuation if the majority become irrevocably hostile. But you have also maintained that a truly non-violent man should never give up hope of converting his opponent by love. Under these circumstances, how can a non-violent man accept defeat and evacuate ?

A. As to this question, it was perfectly correct that a non-violent man would not move out of his place. For such a one there would be no question of compensation. He would simply die at his post and prove that his presence was not a danger to the State or the community. He knew that the Hindus of Noakhali made no such pretension. They were simple folk who loved the world and wanted to live in the world in peace and safety. Such persons would consult their honour if the Government honourably offered them compensation in order to see the majority living in peace. If the mere presence of the Hindus irritated the Muslims who were the majority, he would consider it to be the duty of the Government to offer compensation as it would be of the Government in a Hindu majority province to offer compensation to the Muslims if their presence irritated the majority community.

Q. In case of evacuation, under advice from the Government, should the evacuees ask for compensation for—

(a) all their movable and immovable property,
(b) loss of business ?

In other words, what would you consider to be adequate compensation ?

A. Gandhiji said that the Government would be obliged to compensate for both immovables and movables when the latter could not or were not carried away with him by the evacuee. Loss of business was a ticklish question. He could not conceive the possibility of any Government shouldering the burden of such compensation. He would understand the proposition that asked for a reasonable sum for enabling the person concerned to start business in a new place.

Whilst he examined and admitted the possibility of evacuation, his experience of all India told him that the Hindus and the Muslims knew how to live at peace among themselves. He declined to believe that people had said goodbye to their senses so as to make it impossible to live at peace with each other as they had done for generations.

For, he believed with the late Poet Iqbal that the Hindus and the Muslims who had lived together long under the shadow of the mighty Himalayas and had drunk the waters of the Ganges and the Jamuna had a unique message for the world.

Q. If you think the Government may boycott, i.e. remove the minority community, if they give adequate compensation may not people take time by the forelock and go ?

A. As to this he said that with those who felt that they would take time by the forelock, and with a Hindu corporation formed to take the Hindus away, he had nothing in common. He could not be party to any such scheme. The burden lay entirely on the majority community and the Government. He merely meant that when they declared bankruptcy of wisdom, the minority should go if they were adequately compensated. The other way was the way of violence i.e. civil war not of non-violence.

Q. What is the difference between your non-cooperation and the non-fraternization of the Allies ?

A. The answer is obvious. My non-cooperation was purely non-violent in conception as also in effect. This does not

mean that practice was always perfect. Theory and practice hardly ever coincide even as Euclid's line in practice never coincides with his theoretical definition.

The non-fraternization policy of the Allies led to disastrous results which he who runs may see, and the pity of it is that the disaster is not yet completed. No one knows where it will lead to.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

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MILITARY TRAINING

The thing that pained me was the reference to military education.* I think that we have to wait a long time before a nation-wide decision on the point is made. Otherwise, we are likely to become a curse rather than a blessing to the world. Leaders are not made, they are born. Should the State be in a hurry over this matter even before full independence is established? Therefore, I am surprised that the Central Advisory Board should be party to such a sweeping recommendation as they have made.

Kazirkhil, 21-2-'47
Harijan, 23-3-1947

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* The recommendation referred to here is given below :

CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS

NEW DELHI, Jan. 27th

"The Central Advisory Board of Education has endorsed the view of the Working Committee of the National War Academy that residential schools, where boys may obtain adequate facilities for developing the character and powers of leadership, should be started by Provinces and States to act as 'feeders' for the National War Academy.

"The Board is of opinion that the new type of schools contemplated in the Scheme of National Post-War Education will provide the necessary training for the leadership, character, intelligence, courage and physical fitness required by the military authorities for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

"It directs the attention of provincial authorities to the necessity of developing their schools on these lines which will actually serve as the kind of schools which the military authorities have in mind"......A. P. I.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

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ONE WAY TO FORGET AND FORGIVE

Q. Those who have lost their dear ones, or the homes which they built up through years of patient care, find it extremely difficult to forgive and forget. How can they get over that feeling and look upon the community from which the miscreants came with a feeling of brotherhood ?

A. The speaker said the one way to forget and forgive was to contemplate Bihar which had done much worse than Noakhali and Tipperah. Did they want the Muslims to take dire vengeance for the Hindu atrocities there ? They could not. From this they should learn to forget and forgive, if they did not wish to descend to the lowest depths of barbarity. Moreover, they must not harbour an inferiority complex. They should be brave. And forgiveness was an attribute and adornment of bravery. Let them be truly brave. True bravery refused to strike ; it would suffer all infliction with patient cheerfulness. That would be the truest way of disarming opposition.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

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NON-RESISTANCE

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech referred to a letter from a correspondent which had lately reached him. It was in answer to that letter that he wanted to say that if a man abused him, it would never do for him to return the abuse. An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of leading to its reduction. It was a universal law, he said, that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but could only be quenched by non-violence or non-resistance. But the true meaning of non-resistance had often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not

returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-resistance.

If, for instance, proceeded the speaker, someone asked him under threat of violence to admit a claim, say, like that of Pakistan, he should not immediately rush to return the violence thus offered. In all humility he would ask the aggressor what was really meant by the demand, and if he was really satisfied that it was something worth striving for, then he would have no hesitation in proclaiming from the housetop that the demand was just and it had to be admitted by everyone concerned. But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. He was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments interspersed by periods of peace which was by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for. It was the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare. Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. Gandhiji here related a story from the *Mahabharata*, when one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It was this type of forbearance and courage which Gandhiji wished every Indian to develop whether he was a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition.

The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion but Gandhiji fondly believed that perhaps it was here in India that

its practice had been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints had laid down their lives in *tapashcharya* until poets had felt that the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of their sacrifice. But all that practice of non-violence was nearly dead today. It was necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and violence by non-violence; and where could this be more readily done than in this land of King Janaka and Ramachandra?

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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THE ROYAL ROAD

Gandhiji referred in the beginning of his prayer address to the decision of the British Government to quit India. The latter were a nation with a strong sense of reality; and when they realized that it did not pay to rule, they did not hesitate to withdraw their power over a country. This had been the course of British history in the past. If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians at the same time, asked Gandhiji. Were we to return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our Motherland, in the end, into bits which went by the name of Hindustan and Pakistan, Brahministan and Achhutistan? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province?

Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Did it any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism? Personally, said Gandhiji, he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also so, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not *masjids* or churches in reality the same as

mandirs? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Mussalman, Gandhiji's advice was that if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship. That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance.

Gandhiji then narrated the story of Badshah Khan's conversion to non-violence. The latter came from a tribe whose tradition was to return a blow for a blow, there being cases where blood feud had been handed down from sire to son. Badshah Khan himself felt that such endless reprisals only served to perpetuate the slavery of the Pathans. When he took to non-violence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes. It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan who was endearingly called a *fakir* because he had won the heart of everybody by love and service, had himself reached the highest goal of non-violence. As far as he, the speaker, knew he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it. It was this type of brave non-violence which Gandhiji wished the audience to imitate.

Gandhiji continued that he had come to Bihar in order to help the people in realizing the extent of the madness to which they had stooped. His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated. The ruined houses of the Muslim family, he had just visited, had almost brought tears to his eyes. But he had steeled his heart and had come to teach the Hindu his duty towards his Muslim brother. True repentance required true courage. And Bihar, which had risen to great heights during the Satyagraha in Champaran and which was the land over which the Buddha had roamed and taught, was surely capable once more of rising to heights from which it could radiate its effulgence over the rest of India. Only unadulterated non-violence could raise it to that status.

Gandhiji added that, in his opinion, the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of general lawlessness which had seized them inasmuch as they dared to travel without tickets, pull chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness, burnt *zamindari* crops or belongings. He was no lover of the *zamindari* system. He had often spoken against it; but he frankly confessed that he was not the enemy of the *zamindars*. He owned no enemies. The best way to bring about reform in the economic and social systems, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil that was sought to be liquidated violently. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE

Gandhiji in his post-prayer address said that his aim was the restoration of the old feelings which formerly prevailed among the Bihari Hindus and Mussalmans. Then it could be said of them that they did not merely live like brothers, but were veritably as brothers and sisters to one another. Now and then there might have been differences and even quarrels, but it never went to the point when heart was rent from heart, as it seemed to be now. Painful things had happened which it was even difficult for him to relate; but then he wanted them to keep such happenings in the background and think of what their duty was in the present context.

There were only two ways lying before the country: the course that the Punjab seemed to have taken of returning a blow for a blow, and the other of unadulterated non-violence. Referring to the method of violence, Gandhiji said that some sort of peace might perhaps be established in the province by means of force. He

would hope, but it could never be said with confidence, that the evil would not spread throughout India, as it happened in the case of 1857. Similar things, as we know, had happened during the Sepoy War when it was quelled by means of superior arms. Outwardly, things quieted down but the hatred against an imposed rule went deep underground, with the result that we were even today reaping the harvest of what was then sown. The British Government took the place of the East India Company. They established schools and law courts and Indians took to these with enthusiasm; they even cooperated in the diffusion of Western culture; but, in spite of all this, they could never bear the insult or the degradation involved in political subjugation. Similarly, but in a worse manner, if the Punjab, quietened down by reason of superior force used against the people of the Punjab, the seed of further quarrel and bitterness between brothers and sisters that the Hindus and the Muslims were would go still deeper.

Violence, continued Gandhiji, thus could never be ended by counter-violence. The only effective alternative to it was the way of non-violence. Bihar has had a lesson of it in Champaran in 1917, but he could perhaps say at this distance of time that although the farmers who were responsible for the movement were soon disciplined to stay their hands while non-cooperating with the English planters, their non-violence was the non-violence of the weak. Now that Indians were fighting violently as between brother and brother such non-violence could be of no avail, only non-violence of the strong could prove really effective.

That required, as the first step, that there should be true repentance, based not on bravado but on the genuine feeling that right had to be done by those who had suffered from our momentary madness. Gandhiji wished everyone not to be swayed by his personal influence or by reason of his past service but think calmly and with sufficient detachment; and, if they felt that the way of non-violence appealed to their head and heart, then they should come forward for the reparation of the injury done to the Muslim brother.

The Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League who had been good enough to come to him had complained that although

the Government had made arrangement for repatriations, the mental attitude of the Hindus was not sufficiently reassuring. Gandhiji firmly said that the reality had to be faced and a determined effort made by everyone of them to root out the least trace of the feeling of hostility and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to live in brotherly love once more.

He proceeded by saying that if the Bihari Hindus did not honestly feel like it and imagined that the way of violence alone was the proper answer to the challenge of the times, then let them say so frankly and truthfully. He would not be hurt by the truth but would prefer not to live and see the day when the method of non-violence was thus beaten. It did not matter where he laid down his life for bringing about his cherished aim; anywhere in India would still be India for him. But he still hugged the hope that non-violence would surely be crowned by victory in the end; for in the example which Bihar might set in this line today, lay future hope of peace and progress for our unhappy land.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

142

A WRONG ASSUMPTION

Gandhiji wanted people to disabuse themselves of the thought that they had usurped any power from the British. Non-violent non-cooperation did not admit of any such assumption. What they performed was a simple duty. The result undoubtedly was that the British naturally and voluntarily divested themselves of much authority and powers, and it was up to them to do their duty along the lines of non-violence if they were to have complete power in and for the people. The late events in Bihar were a departure from that right conduct and, if the truth was not recognized and the infection of the Punjab spread, he had not a shadow of doubt that they would lose what was within their grasp. He, therefore, expected Bihar to recognize the fact and do its duty honourably and well.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

143

THE AIM OF LIFE

Gandhiji's weekly silence having commenced, his written message in Hindustani was read out to the congregation after the prayers. It was his earnest prayer that those who were present and those others whom his voice could reach should understand the aim of life. The aim of life was that they should serve the Power that had created them, and on Whose mercy or consent depended their very breath, by heartily serving Its creation. That meant love, not hate which one saw everywhere. They had forgotten that aim and were either actually fighting each other or preparing for that fight. If they could not escape that calamity, they should regard India's independence as an impossible dream. If they thought that they would get independence by the simple fact of the British power quitting the land, they were sadly mistaken. The British were leaving India. But if they continued fighting one another, some other power or powers would step in. If they thought they could fight the whole world with its weapons, it was a folly.

A friend had written, continued Gandhiji, that a sort of peace seemed to have been established in the Punjab through military occupation. That peace was the peace of the grave. The people were silently preparing for an open and deadlier fight. Weapons were being collected. After that even the military would find it impossible to control the people. It was his firm conviction that the peace established with the aid of the military or the police would be no peace. True peace would only come when at least one side, if not both, adopted the true bravery that non-violence gave.

Bihar had realized, said Gandhiji, that there was no bravery in killing women and children. It was sheer cowardice. It would be a grand thing if Bihar could manifest the true bravery of silent strength, and show thereby the true path of life to the whole world.

Harijan, 6-4-1947

144

STRIVE FOR ONE WORLD

[Gandhiji attended the Inter-Asian Relations Conference twice during his stay at Delhi. On Tuesday, 1-4-'47, when he attended the Conference for the first time, he did not deliver any speech but answered some questions that were addressed to him by some of the delegates. The questions and answers are reproduced below.]

"I will not like to live in this world if it is not to be one. Certainly I should like to see this dream realized in my life-time," declared Gandhiji in answer to a question whether he believed in the theory of one world and whether it would succeed under the present conditions.

He added: "I hope that all the representatives who have come here from the different Asian countries will strive their level best to have only one world. They will have to think out ways and means for achieving this goal.

"If you work with fixed determination, there is no doubt that in our own generation we will certainly realize this dream."

Dr. Han Liwu from China asked him his views on the proposal to set up an Asian Institute.

Gandhiji replying said:

"Through correspondence I know almost all parts of the world and naturally, therefore, of Asia, though I know very few of you personally — perhaps none of you. I am doubtful whether I can say anything useful but the question is one after my heart. Some portions of the question put to me now were discussed by Pandit Nehru yesterday. It is a great event that for the first time in our history such a Conference takes place on Indian soil. I am sorry that I have to refer to the conditions that we see today. We do not know how to keep peace between ourselves. We have so many differences which we cannot settle between ourselves in a humane and friendly manner. We think we must resort to the law of the jungle. It is an experience which I would not like you to carry to your respective countries. I would instead like you to bury it here.

"India is now on the eve of her full independence. India wants to be independent of everybody who wants to own this country. We do not want a change of masters. We want to be masters on our own soil, though I am not quite sure how it will come about. All that we know is that we should do our duty and leave the results in the hands of God and not in the hands of man. Man is supposed to be the maker of his own destiny. It is partly true. He can make his destiny only in so far as he is allowed by the Great Power which overrides all our intentions, all our plans, and carries out His own plans.

"I call that Great Power not by the name of *Allah*, not by the name of *Khuda* or God but by the name of Truth. For me, Truth is God and Truth overrides all our plans. The whole truth is only embodied within the heart of that Great Power—Truth. I was taught from my early days to regard Truth as unapproachable—something that you cannot reach. A great Englishman taught me to believe that God is unknowable. He is knowable but knowable only to the extent that our limited intellect allows.

"You, gentlemen, have come here from different parts of Asia, and having come with eagerness and zest you should all have yearly meetings or two-yearly or three-yearly conferences. You should carry away sweet memories of the meetings and make every effort to build the great edifice of Truth.

"All the Asian representatives have come together. Is it in order to wage a war against Europe, against America or against non-Asiatics? I say most emphatically 'No.' This is not India's mission. I am free to confess that I will feel extremely sorry if India, having won independence through essentially and predominantly non-violent means, was going to use that independence for the suppression of the other parts of the world. Europeans had exploited different races inhabiting this vast continent called Asia.

"It will be a sorry thing if we go away from this Conference without a fixed determination that Asia shall live and live as free as every other Western nation. I just wanted to say that conferences like the present should meet regularly, and if you ask me where, India is the place."

Harijan, 20-4-1947

145

THE MESSAGE OF ASIA

Addressing the concluding session of the Inter-Asian Relations Conference on Wednesday the 2nd of April, 1947, in the *Purana Quila* at Delhi, Gandhiji said: You, friends, have not seen the real India and you are not meeting in conference in the midst of real India. Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore are big cities and are, therefore, influenced by the West. If you really want to see India at its best, you have to find it in the humble *bhangi* homes of our villages. There are 7,00,000 of such villages and 38 crores of people inhabit them.

If some of you see the villages, you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch below the dung heap. I do not pretend to say that they were ever places of paradise. Today they are really dung heaps. They were not like that before. What I speak is not from history but from what I have seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other and have seen the miserable specimens of humanity with lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung heaps, are to be found the humble *bhangis* in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.

Stating that wisdom had come to the West from the East, Gandhiji said: The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by Buddha who belonged to East—India. Who followed Buddha? Jesus, who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses who belonged to Palestine though he was born in Egypt. After Jesus came Mohammed. I omit any reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights. I do not call them lesser lights but they are less known to the literary world. All the same I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia. And then what happened? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that. I would not talk any further.

I have told you the story in order to make you understand that what you see in the big cities is not the real India. Certainly, the carnage that is going on before our very eyes is a shame-

ful thing. As I said yesterday, do not carry the memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India.

What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by imitating the atom bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of love and the message of truth. I do not want merely to appeal to your head. I want to capture your heart.

In this age of democracy, in this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. You will complete the conquest of the West not through vengeance because you have been exploited, but with real understanding. I am sanguine if all of you put your hearts together — not merely heads — to understand the secret of the message these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become worthy of that great message, the conquest of the West will be completed. This conquest will be loved by the West itself.

The West is today pining for wisdom. It is despairing of a multiplication of the atom bombs, because atom bombs mean utter destruction not merely of the West but of the whole world, as if the prophecy of the Bible is going to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. It is up to you to tell the world of its wickedness and sin — that is the heritage your teachers and my teachers have taught Asia.

Harijan. 20-4-1947

REAL v. EPHEMERAL

For thirty years, Gandhiji said in his post-prayer speech, he had preached the gospel of *satya* and *ahimsa* to them. For twenty years he had done likewise in South Africa. He was sure Indians in South Africa were the richer for following him there, and here too those who had followed truth and non-violence had lost nothing. It was his profession to teach the people to leave the ephemeral for the real. If he went to the Punjab, it could not be to preach revenge. That would be a disservice to both the Hindus and the Sikhs and also to the Muslims. The Bible rightly taught that vengeance belonged to God. Gandhiji continued that he could not understand a Pakistan where no non-Muslim could live in peace and security, nor a Hindustan where the Muslims were unsafe. He had been to Bihar and tried to wean the Hindus from their anger and restore confidence in the Muslims. The Ministers there were anxious to repair the terrible wrongs done to the poor Muslims by the Hindus. Rajendra Babu was the uncrowned king of Bihar. Congress rule, which should exercise its influence equally on the Hindus and the Muslims, could not be truly national if the Muslims could not feel safe under it. Therefore, he was glad that many Hindus in Bihar had publicly expressed their regret for the shameful deeds done by the Hindus and assured him that such deeds would not be repeated. He would appeal to the Muslim leaders likewise to ask their fellow Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces not to try to wipe out the non-Muslims. Whatever provocative language the Hindus and the Sikhs used in the Punjab — he was told that they had done so—that was no reason whatsoever for the orgy of cruelty perpetrated by mad Muslims in areas where they were in the majority.

Gandhiji reiterated that it was wrong and cowardly to ask for either military or police protection. They should have the bravery of non-violence which feared not death. Otherwise, there was nothing for them except to flee from their homes, but that would not be bravery.

Those who wept when catastrophes came were slaves and those who asked for military protection would remain slaves. Gandhiji hoped the people would neither go in for civil war nor elect to remain slaves. The former would mean that India would lend a hand not only to her own destruction but to the destruction of the world. Was the land that was bounded by the immortal Himalayas and watered by the healing stream of the Ganges going to destruction through violence ? He devoutly hoped that they would give up all thought of huge armies. Those would lead them nowhere and their independence would then be nothing worth.

Harijan, 27-4-1947

147

ABOUT THE STATEMENT

Gandhiji referred to a statement which he had signed at the suggestion of the Viceroy while he was in Delhi. The act had the consent of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other members of the Working Committee. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had also signed it. The terms of the document were:

"We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

"We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid both in speech and writing, any word which might be construed as an incitement to such acts."

So far as his signature was concerned it had no value for he had never believed in violence. But it was significant that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had signed it. If the spirit of the appeal was adhered to by the signatories, and there was no reason why it should not be, they could hope that all the trouble and blood-

shed would cease. It might be that they would now enable him to leave Bihar and do other work.

They might well ask why his signature was taken and not of the Members of the Working Committee or of the Congress President. He could not go into the matter. He confessed that he represented nobody but himself. Nevertheless, the signatures laid a heavy responsibility on both of them. He had not signed the appeal only on behalf of any one community. It meant assuming responsibility for all communities. He claimed that all religions were equal. A similar claim could be advanced on the Qaid-e-Asam's behalf since the appeal was issued not only to one community but to all the communities. And there was a time when Jinnah Saheb had a high position in the Congress.

The Viceroy should be congratulated on bringing about the unique document. No doubt it would have been better if such a document had been signed as between the Congress and the League without any outsider's intervention. He hoped, however, that there would now be cooperation between the two bodies.

Harijan, 4-5-1947

148

THE RULE OF AHIMSA

After the usual prayers Gandhiji in his remarks referred to two letters he had received: one from the Punjab from a lady known to him, and the other a very well written letter from a Bihari who had chosen not to give his address and probably had given an assumed name. Both were friendly letters but written in anger. They had lost faith in *ahimsa* and practically advised Gandhiji's retirement and to save his good name which he had earned by his service. These friends did not know the virtue of *ahimsa*. His dream was not that some persons, the soldiers and the police, should save their honour, but every man and woman should be the custodian of his or her own honour. This was possible only under the rule of *ahimsa* and no other. He was never tired of repeating that the highest form of bravery was to be expressed through *ahimsa*. The people of

Bihar had before them the example of the *ahimsa* of the indigo-growing peasants of Champaran who were able to bring to an end a century old wrong.

Harijan, 4-5-1947

149

TRUE RELIGION

The following is the English version of the written speech of Gandhiji, read before the prayer gathering it being his day of silence.

I am sorry to let you know that I shall have to go to Delhi again, by the morning train of the 30th. There is a call from Pandit Nehru. *Rastrapati* Kripalaniji has also sent a telegram from Rajputana that I should be in Delhi by the first May, as the Congress Working Committee meets on that day. It pains me to leave you at this stage. I do not relish the idea of leaving Bihar unless the Mussalmans have completely shed their fear and both the communities allow me to leave with a clear conscience. I felt the same when I left Noakhali. For both these places I have the same motto before me, *Do or Die*. My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be like a new birth and give me additional strength if the Hindus and the Mussalmans of both these places began to live at peace with each other and shed their animosity. God knows what will come out of this travail. Man can only try and perish in the attempt. God is all in all. We are only zeros. The same mission takes me to Delhi. I hope to return within a short time and resume duty.

You may be astonished to learn that I continue to receive letters charging me that I have compromised the interests of the Hindus by acting as a friend of the Muslims. How can I convince people by mere words if the sixty years of my public life have failed to demonstrate that by trying to befriend the Muslims I have only proved myself a true Hindu and have rightly served the Hindus and Hinduism? The essence of true religious teaching is that one should serve and befriend all. I learnt this in my

mother's lap. You may refuse to call me a Hindu. I know no defence except to quote a line from Iqbal's famous song: *Majhab nahin sikhata apasmen ber rakhna* (मज़हब नहीं सिखाता आपसमें बैर रखना), meaning religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.

Harijan, 11-5-1947

150

QUIT NOW

[On the 5th of May Gandhiji answered several questions put to him by Mr. Doon Campbell, Reuter's special correspondent at New Delhi. The answers cover a large field—the current situation in India and world affairs. The questions and answers are given below.—Ed.]

Q. Is the communal division of India inevitable? Will such division solve the communal problem?

A. Personally, I have always said No, and I say No even now to both these questions.

Q. Do you subscribe to the opinion that Britain will be morally obliged to stay on in India if the outstanding Hindu-Muslim differences have not been resolved by June, 1948?

A. This is a question that has never been put to me before. It would be a good thing if the British were to go today — thirteen months means mischief to India. I do not question the nobility of the British declaration, I do not question the sincerity of the Viceroy, but facts are facts. Neither the British Cabinet nor the Viceroy, however outstanding he may be, can alter facts. And the facts are that India has been trained to look to the British power for everything. Now it is not possible for India to take her mind off that state all of a sudden. I have never appreciated the argument that the British want so many months to get ready to leave. During that time all parties will look to the British Cabinet and the Viceroy. We have not defeated the British by force of arms. It has been a victory for India by moral force. Assuming, of course, that every word of what has been said is meant to be carried out, then the British decision

will go down in history as the noblest act of the British nation. That being so, the thirteen months' stay of the British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help, because everybody looks for help to the great military machine they have brought into being. That happened in Bengal, in Bihar, in the Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Province. The Hindus and the Muslims said in turn: 'Let us have the British troops.' It is a humiliating spectacle. I have often said before but it does not suffer in value through repetition because every time I repeat it, it gains force: the British will have to take the risk of leaving India to chaos or anarchy. This is so because there has been no Home Rule; it has been imposed on the people. And, when you voluntarily remove that rule there might be no rule in the initial state. It might have come about if we had gained victory by the force of arms. The communal feuds you see here are, in my opinion, partly due to the presence of the British. If the British were not here, we would still go through the fire no doubt, but that fire would purify us.

Q. What sort of Indo-British relationship do you envisage after June, 1948?

A. I envisage the friendliest relationship between Britain and India assuming that a complete withdrawal takes place with complete honesty behind it—no mental reservations of any kind whatsoever.

Q. Do you believe the United Nations Organization, as at present constituted, can maintain a lasting peace?

A. No. I fear the world is heading towards another show-down. It is a fear that permeates many minds. But if all goes well in India, then the world may have a long peace. It will largely depend on the manner in which India takes it. And that will depend largely on British statesmanship.

Q. What is the solution to the Palestine problem?

A. It has become a problem which is almost insoluble. If I were a Jew, I would tell them: 'Don't be so silly as to resort to terrorism, because you simply damage our own case which otherwise would be a proper case.' If it is just political hankering then I think there is no value in it. Why should they hanker after Palestine? They are a great race and have great gifts. I have lived with the Jews many years in South Africa.

If it is a religious longing then surely terrorism has no place. They should meet the Arabs, make friends with them, and not depend on British aid or American aid or any aid, save what descends from Jehovah.

Harijan, 18-5-1947

151

AHIMSA, A FACT OF LIFE

Q. 1. The Hindus being influenced by your preaching of *ahimsa* may in the near future get beaten by the Muslim League followers. This is the general feeling in view of the belief that the Muslims are being secretly armed on a wide scale.

A. 1. The assumption is serious. If it is sound, it casts a grave reflection upon the Provincial Governments. In any event, how I wish the Hindus were influenced by my teaching of *ahimsa* which is a force mightier than the force of arms however powerful. No teacher can be held responsible for a caricature of his teachings. Do we not know how geometrical propositions are caricatured by indifferent pupils? Are the teachers to be blamed? The utmost that can be said against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of *ahimsa*. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful.

Q. 2. After the British withdrawal from India, there is a likelihood of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is a fear that the Nationalists, unless they immediately started learning self-defence with fire-arms, may suffer and ultimately find themselves under the heels of the Muslim League whose followers believe only in fighting. Pakistan or no Pakistan, the trouble is coming because there is the secret hand of imperialism working behind the scenes. Would you not modify your theory of *ahimsa* in the larger context of such a political situation overtaking the country for the sake of individual defence?

A. 2. The Nationalists are not worth the proud name they bear, if they fear the Muslim League as you imagine. Can

the Nationalists exclude the followers of the League from the sphere of their action? I am not thinking of vote-catching devices. I am thinking of the Muslims as Indians, the same as others, needing their care and attention. If the leaders have ceased to believe in *ahimsa*, they should boldly and frankly say so and set about putting their house in order. For me there is no scope for any change. *Ahimsa* is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who has tasted apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter? Those who say they are bitter have tasted not apples but something looking very much like them. *Ahimsa* should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists assuming for the sake of argument that it is working as suggested in the question.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

152

GOONDA RULE

In his written message to the prayer gathering Gandhiji said:

The thought that is uppermost in my mind today is how to combat the *goonda* rule that seems to be fast enveloping us. This I say of all India; perhaps it is true more or less of the whole world.

Let the Hindus not deceive themselves with the belief that it is well with them. As a devout Hindu that I claim to be, I wish to affirm that we Hindus will be living in a fool's paradise if we harboured any such thought. *Goondaism* is no preparation for taking the place of foreign rule.

The thoughtless interference at prayer meetings is not a small symptom of the disease I am describing. Intolerance is a form of *goondaism*. It is no less disgraceful than the savagery which we see announced in the daily press. Let all political workers, be they Hindu, Muslim or any other ponder well over what is happening before their eyes. Let it not be said by the future generations that we were trying to learn how to lose

liberty before it was even gained. I would ask all the school masters of India, now that they are no longer under the observation of the foreign masters, that they should recognize their true function even at the risk of their lives to give the right bent to the minds of those whom it is their proud privilege to mould.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

153

THE ONLY WAY

Calcutta has virtually become divided into Hindu and Muslim zones. What can be done by the citizens so that normal life can once again be restored ?

Gandhiji replied :

The only way is at least for one party to be wholly truthful and non-violent. Then they will fear no one but God. Such men are the men of courage. All parties will make friends with them and even *goondas* will shed their *goondaism* before them. I know of no other better way. I have appealed to the Muslims who are in a majority to take the lead.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

154

ADVICE TO SIND HINDUS

Gandhiji's timely clarification of his advice to Sind Hindus has heartened them to face the future with courage and fortitude. Asked to clarify his advice that Sind Hindus should migrate in the event of partition, Gandhiji told Bhai Pratap Dayaldas of Hyderabad who met him at New Delhi :

"I said that you should suffer bravely, but non-violently unto death. But if you cannot do that and must take a disgraceful surrender of all including honour, your womenfolk and religion, in that case, the only and safe proper course for you to take is migration, not singly, but of all the Hindus and other non-Muslims."

To a further query as to what would be the plight of the minorities in Sind in the case of partition of India, Gandhiji replied:

"That question is to be fought out in the Constituent Assembly, but I am certain that all protection that is humanly possible will be stipulated for. You must not be weaklings."

Harijan, 25-5-1947

155

PERFECT GENTLEMANLINESS

Gandhiji was sure that if Bihar succeeded in instilling confidence in the Muslims, her influence would be felt throughout India. Some Hindus wrote to Gandhiji to ask if he expected them to flatter and fawn on the Mussalmans. He, as a life-long fighter with truth and *ahimsa* as his weapons, could not countenance that. What he counselled was the control of their baser instincts of anger and hatred. And if avoiding harshness and adopting perfect gentlemanliness was flattery, he would not hesitate to use that word.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

156

HOW TO COMBAT HIMSA?

Q. 1. The leaders and followers of the League do not believe in attaining their object through non-violence. In such circumstances, how is it possible to melt their hearts or to convince them of the evil of violent action?

A. 1. Violence can only be effectively met by non-violence. This is an old, established truth. The questioner does not really understand the working of non-violence. If he did, he would have known that the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against true non-violence. That very few understand how to wield this mighty weapon is true. It requires a lot of understanding and strength

of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. The difficulty one experiences in meeting *himsa* with *ahimsa* arises from weakness of mind.

Q. 2. Today many people are beginning to feel that a clash, possibly of a violent character, with the supporters of the League is inevitable. The nationalists feel that until the League agrees to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, its demand for Pakistan is unjust. What means should they adopt to meet the situation ?

A. 2. If the answer to the first question is held valid, the second question does not arise. However, the question may be discussed for a clearer understanding. If the majority of the Muslims obey Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, a violent conflict should be out of the question, or if the majority of the Hindus take their stand on non-violence, no matter how much violence the Muslims use, it is bound to fail. One thing, however, should be perfectly understood. The votaries of non-violence cannot harbour violence in thought, let alone the question of doing it. If Pakistan is wrong, partition of Bengal and the Punjab will not make it right. Two wrongs will not make one right.

Q. 3. The majority of the Socialists claim that if there was a socialist revolution the economic question will come to the forefront throwing the communal conflict in the background. Do you agree ? If such a revolution takes place, will it promote the establishment of the Kingdom of God which you call *Ramarajya* ?

A. 3. The economic conflict you envisage is likely to make the Hindu-Muslim tension less acute. Even the end of the Hindu-Muslim conflict will not end all our troubles. What is happening is this. With the end of slavery and the dawn of independence, all the weaknesses of society are bound to come to the surface. I do not see any reason to be unnecessarily upset about it. If we keep our balance at such a time, every tangle will be solved. As far as the economic question is concerned it has to be solved in any case. Today, there is gross economic inequality. The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no *Ramarajya* in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat. I accepted the theory of socialism even

while I was in South Africa. My opposition to the Socialists and others consists in attacking violence as a means of effecting any lasting reform.

Q. 4. You say that a *Raja*, a zamindar or a capitalist should be a trustee for the poor. Do you think that any such exists today ? Or do you expect them to be so transformed ?

A. 4. I think that some very few exist even today, though not in the full sense of the term. They are certainly moving in that direction. It can, however, be asked whether the present *Rajas* and others can be expected to become trustees of the poor. If they do not become trustees of their own accord, force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When *Panchayat Raj* is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the *Rajas* can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-cooperate with the evil of *zamindari* or capitalism, it must die of inanition. In *Panchayat Raj* only the *Panchayat* will be obeyed and the *Panchayat* can only work through the law of their making.

(Adapted from the original in Hindustani)

New Delhi, 25-5-'47
Harijan, 1-6-1947

IN DELHI

In the sweltering heat of Delhi Gandhiji arrived on the 25th May in answer to Pandit Nehru's call. Both the Sardar and the Panditji had wired to him to come to Mussoorie where they had gone for a brief rest and change. But he could not go as he had promised himself not to leave his field of service till friendly relations were established between the two communities in Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta.

The happenings in the country oppress him heavily. Having deprived himself of the help of his usual staff, he burns the candle at both ends. He has become reckless with regard to his health and life. "In the India as I see it shaping today, there is no place for me," he said. There was passion in his voice. "I have given up the hope of living 125 years," he continued. "I might last a year or two. That is a different matter. But I have no wish to live if India is to be submerged in a deluge of violence, as it is threatening to do. There is the communal frenzy and they are talking of militarization and industrialization. India might become a first class military power and a highly industrialized country. But where is the place for village industries or *khadi*, symbols of non-violence in such India?"

In a letter to an old Ashramite he wrote: "I am in the midst of flames. Is it the kindness of God or His irony that the flames do not consume me?"

What is it that sustains him? It is his Himalayan faith. A European friend who had spent a few days with him in India in 1935 writes to him from America: "I think of you in prayer while in that part of the world, where I am not very far from the place where they manufacture the atomic bomb material U 235. I see only the light of hope for our Western civilization in your radiant and friendly guidance and wisdom." In his reply Gandhiji wrote: "I am the same as when you saw me except that my faith burns, if possible, brighter than before."

The Chinese Ambassador Dr. Lo Chia Luen came with Pandit Nehru to see Gandhiji. "How do you think things will

shape themselves? How do you predict the future?" he asked.

"I am an irrepressible optimist," replied Gandhiji. "We have not lived and toiled in vain all these years that we should become barbarians as we appear to be becoming, looking at all the senseless bloodshed in Bengal, Bihar and the Punjab. But I feel it is just an indication that as we are throwing off the foreign yoke all the dirt and froth is coming to the surface. When the Ganges is in flood, the water is turbid. The dirt comes to the surface. When the flood subsides, you see the clear blue water which soothes the eye. That is what I hope for and live for. I do not wish to live to see Indian humanity becoming barbarian.

"And who can predict the future? Years ago I read Butler's *Analogy*. Therein I read that the 'future is the result somewhat of our past'. This thought has persisted with me because it coincides with the Indian belief. We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future."

The Chinese Ambassador was thoughtful. "History sometimes repeats itself, because we do not learn the lesson of history," he said. "It is only a half truth," replied Gandhiji. "History may seem to be repeating itself today. I believe that nothing remains static. Human nature either goes up or goes down. Let us hope, in India, it is going up. Otherwise, there is nothing but deluge for India and probably for the whole world."

They talked of the havoc wrought by the war in China. Would the war-weary Asiatic countries follow in the footsteps of Japan and turn to militarization? The answer lay in what direction India would throw its weight. "India is becoming the laughing stock of the world," he said in the course of one of his post-prayer speeches. "The world asks, where is your non-violence with which you have won your independence? I have to hang down my head in shame. Will a free India present to the world a lesson of peace or of hatred and violence of which the world is already sick unto death?"

The learned ambassador conveyed to Gandhiji the deepest respect and affection of the Chinese people. Gandhiji valued their affection and said he would love to visit China which had so much in common with India. The ambassador began to talk

of Chinese philosophy and quoted Lao-tse's maxim: "Production without possession, action without self-assertion, creation without domination." Gandhiji's face beamed. "You are talking the language of the *Upanishads*," he said. "The same thought is to be found in the *Ishopanishad*."

New Delhi, 28-5-'47
Harijan, 8-6-1947

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FAITH IN NON-VIOLENCE RE-ENFORCED

[Gandhiji gave the following answers to questions put to him by the United Press of America.—Ed.]

Q. 1. Do you feel that India will ultimately be united under one Central Government regardless of what the immediate settlement may be?

A. 1. The future will depend upon what we do in the present.

Q. 2. Do you foresee the possibility of the world being united under one central governing body composed of representatives of the component parts?

A. 2. That is the only condition on which the world can live.

Q. 3. Do you think there is any possibility of an armed conflict between Russia and the United States?

A. 3. Anything is possible, but it is highly improbable.

Q. 4. What do you feel is the most acceptable solution to the Palestine problem?

A. 4. Abandonment wholly by the Jews of terrorism and other forms of violence.

Q. 5. Do you believe that Egypt and the Sudan should unite under one government when the British leave?

A. 5. I have no doubt that they ought to.

Q. 6. As a result of your experiment during the past five months, do you feel that the principle of non-violence can yet be triumphant in the solution of the world's problems?

A. 6. My five months in Noakhali have only confirmed my previous experience that non-violence can solve all our ills.

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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HOPING AGAINST HOPE

Gandhiji in his written prayer message said in part :

"There is an additional reason why no vital change in the shape of Hindustan is possible in the present state of the country. There is the joint statement issued by the Qaid-e-Azam and me. It enunciates a sound principle that there should be no violence employed in the pursuit of political aims. If in the teeth of that document, the country continues the mad career of violence of the worst kind and if the British Power is weak enough to submit to it in the vain hope that after the mad thirst is quenched things will run smooth, it would have left a bloody legacy for which not only India but the whole world will blame her. We will then have learnt the cruel lesson that everything was to be got if mad violence was perpetrated in sufficient measure. I would, therefore, urge every patriot and certainly the British Power to face out the worst violence and leave India, as it can be left under the Cabinet Mission document of 16th May of the last year. Today in the presence of the British Power we are only demoralized by the orgy of blood, arson and worse. After it is withdrawn, let me hope, we shall have the wisdom to think coherently and keep India one or split it into two or more parts. But if we are bent even then on fighting, I am sure we will not be so demoralized as we are today, though admittedly all violence carries with it some amount of demoralization. I shall hope against hope that India free will not give the world an additional object lesson in violence with which it is already sick almost unto death."

Harijan, 8-6-1947

WEAPON OF THE BRAVE

The talk went about that Gandhiji was staying in Bihar, no doubt, in order to help the Muslims but the result would be that the Hindus would be butchered. He had said to the Hindus that even if the Muslims went mad, they should not lose their reason. He was not ashamed of giving that advice to anyone. The Hindus were in a minority in the Punjab, but there were the brave Sikhs each one of whom considered himself equivalent to $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh. Did it mean that one Sikh could shed as much blood as $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh? He thought not. It meant that one Sikh could stand up to $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakh persons against him. In that sense it was a tribute to the bravery of the Sikhs. Not one Sikh should stand by and see a wrong perpetrated. He should give his life to prevent it. His advice, therefore, to the Sikhs also was that whatever might have been the use of the sword in Sikh history, in this age of the atom bomb there was no weapon like non-violent resistance. It did not make cowards of men. It infused courage even in women. If he recommended non-violence, it was because he was convinced that it was the weapon of the really brave.

Analogy of the Mad Dog

Some one asked Gandhiji what should be done with a mad dog? His reply was that if the friend meant a mad dog literally, he himself would say that in the first place a dog would not go mad amongst really god-fearing men. But supposing in the presence of men who considered themselves of God, they found a dog running amuck, they would naturally kill it rather than allow many of themselves to be bitten by a rabid dog and be sent to Kasauli for treatment as they used to before.

But what if a human being went mad? His own brother had gone mad. He (Gandhiji) was a small boy of ten at that time. But his mother and father did not have the mad son killed. They sent for *vaidyas* and doctors and had him treated and cured.

"You are all my blood brothers whether you are Hindus or Muslims. Supposing you go mad and I have a battalion at my command, would I have you shot? No. I would not like to be shot myself, if I went mad. My friend's son went mad. I had to send him to the lock-up but I would not have him killed."

Today the madness of communal frenzy had taken possession of the country. People talked of country-wide riots on June 2nd. He was convinced none of them wanted rivers of blood to flow. One had to put up with mad frenzy and not begin to be frenzied himself by way of retaliation.

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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FROM AMERICA

Mr. Richard Gregg writes from U.S.A.:

"Today's New York newspaper carries a dispatch from New Delhi stating that you have given up hope of living for 125 years and that there is no place for you in India because of the deluge of violence. If this report is substantially correct, I beg you, please reconsider your attitude. As I see the matter there is far more at stake than present violence in India, even if this should last for fifteen years.

"India is the source of the deepest and strongest spiritual insight and culture in the world. It is also the most enduring. Despite the grave harm that has been done to Hindu culture by the modern loss of religion and contact with the West which so fully embodies that secularism, Hindu culture still stands supreme. Most of the world will soon be ruined by violence and greed and godlessness, but I have hoped that there would be a remnant, no matter how small, in India which would keep its spiritual anchorage and be an island of hope and spiritual insight which may once more be the source of life and sanity for the stricken world.

"More than anyone else, you represent that Hindu culture, and the continuance of your life is of great importance to all the world. Even though for a time the number of those who agree with you and truly follow the road of *ahimsa* may shrink to only a handful, the very smallness makes possible an enhancement of quality and spiritual power. Then when mankind have learned better out of their suffering, (it seems to be the only way most of them can learn), they will turn again to the spiritual sources. We may not tell God that if violence (the folly

of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can in order to do our utmost. I only dare say this to you because I want you so much to stay with us.

"Let me speak in a little more detail. Very careful economic studies over a long period of time have shown that there are several waves or cycles or rhythm of economic activity of various kinds. There is a 54-year rhythm of wholesale prices, an 18-year cycle of real-estate activity, a 9-year wave of another sort, and a still other variety of 3½ years. All the great depressions have been governed by these. All these cycles reach their lowest point in 1951-52. We are now entering what will probably be the severest economic depression that industrial nations have ever experienced. It will engulf the United States as well as all other nations. With the present dependence of Great Britain on economic aid from the U.S., the inevitable recession of that aid will, I believe, put an end to British interference in India. If another war, such as now seems likely between the United States and Russia, occurs, there will be the end of the present Western civilization and the dominance of the White man over the world. I think that Hindu India can then lead the world out of the holocaust. That is my hope. I beg of you, please try to live out all those 125 years so that you as God's servant may play your part in that supremely important time. India and the world will need you then even more than now. Because this is a moral world governed by God's laws, mankind must suffer by its continued violation for centuries of these laws, especially by the governments of the nations. The sufferings are terrible to contemplate, but if they did not come, it would indicate that this is not a moral universe after all. So, the very suffering is a proof of our optimism, our belief that God's laws prevail and can no more be successfully violated than man can violate the force of gravitation.

"God bless you and keep you. Please, please, reconsider your discouragement and keep on living for the rest of the world as well as India. As I wrote to you in my last letter, there is always violence during and soon after the transfer of political power between nations and groups. When the thirteen American colonies broke away from Britain in 1776, we had our riots and fighting too. It was called Shay's Rebellion. All history shows similar phenomena throughout the West, and enough of India has been infected by the Western ideas that it follows. But I hope the infection will end when the next war comes and Indians see beyond any doubt where irreligious Western culture leads."

The dispatch from which Mr. Gregg quotes is substantially correct. The loss of hope arises from my knowledge that I have

not attained sufficient detachment and control over my temper and emotions which entitle one to entertain the hope. One day I found to my cost that I had not attained the required detachment. No one has the right to live at all unless it is a life of service. And a man without detachment in terms of the *Gita* cannot render full service.

A faithful confession of one's failings is good for the soul. It enables one the better to get rid of those failings. Let the readers of the *Harijan* know that I am making every effort to get out of them so that I can regain the lost hope. In this connection I should also repeat that the hope is open to every one who dedicates himself to the service of his fellowmen. Nor need it be laughed out as an idle dream. That it may not be realized in me and many fellow aspirants should be no proof of its futility.

The statement that I find no place for myself in a society that bases itself on violence has nothing to do with the reported loss of hope. I deliberately use the adjective 'reported' for I do not want to harbour the thought of hopelessness. What was true when the report was made, need not be and, is not true in an equal measure today.

It must be clear that there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. That is exactly the meaning of my second statement and no more. I am in that society, though not of it. The statement registers my protest.

Has the non-violent effort of the past 30 years come to naught? I have already argued out the position in my speeches reported in these columns. It is to be hoped that the violence has not penetrated India's villages. Be that as it may, I wholly endorse Mr. Gregg's warning that "we may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can." I very much fear that the dispatch in question tore the sentences out of their context and evoked the doubts expressed by Mr. Gregg. I hope I am incapable of judging God.

New Delhi, 22-6-'47
Harijan, 29-6-1947

NON-VIOLENCE

[The following is from Gandhiji's written message for the prayer gathering on 15-6-47—S. N.]

I would love to attempt an answer to a question which has been addressed to me from more than one quarter of the globe. It is :

How can you account for the growing violence among your people on the part of political parties for the furtherance of political ends ? Is this the result of the thirty years of non-violent practice for ending British rule ? Does your message of non-violence still hold good for the world ? I have condensed the sentiments of my correspondents in my own language.

In answer I must confess my bankruptcy, not that of non-violence. I have already said that the non-violence that was offered during the past thirty years was that of the weak. Whether it is a good enough answer or not is for others to judge. It must be further admitted that such non-violence can have no play in the altered circumstances. India has no experience of the non-violence of the strong. It serves no purpose for me to continue to repeat that the non-violence of the strong is the strongest force in the world. The truth requires constant and extensive demonstration. This I am endeavouring to do to the best of my ability. What if the best of my ability is very little ? May I not be living in a fool's paradise ? Why should I ask people to follow me in the fruitless search ? These are pertinent questions. My answer is quite simple. I ask nobody to follow me. Everyone should follow his or her own inner voice. If he or she has no ears to listen to it, he or she should do the best he or she can. In no case should he or she imitate others sheep-like.

One more question has been and is being asked. If you are sure that India is going the wrong way, why do you associate with the wrong-doers ? Why do you not plough your own lonely furrow and have faith that if you are right, your erstwhile friends and followers will seek you out ? I regard this as a very

fair question. I must not attempt to argue against it. All I can say is that my faith is as strong as ever. It is quite possible that my technique is faulty. There are old and tried precedents to guide one in such a complexity. Only, no one should act mechanically. Hence I can say to all my counsellors that they should have patience with me and even share my belief that there is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives, that would be their failure, never of the eternal law.

Harijan, 29-6-1947

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NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

The Congress President in his concluding speech at the A. I. C. C. had said that Gandhiji had not been able to show the way of combating communal strife in a non-violent manner as he had done in the case of fighting the British. Gandhiji had said that he was groping in the dark and though he said that he was solving the Hindu-Muslim problem for the whole of India by his work in Noakhali and Bihar, he (the President) had not been able to understand how the technique could be applied on a mass scale. That was why he was not standing with Gandhiji that day and had agreed to the partition of India.

Gandhiji's reply was that his groping in the dark referred to the fact that he did not know how to make the people see his view-point. He had no doubt that non-violence was as effective a weapon against communal strife as it had proved in their struggle against the British. The people had followed him then, because they knew they could not face the might of British arms in any other way. It was the non-violence of the weak. That won't serve the purpose in communal strife. For that was required pure non-violence of the brave.

Speaking in the prayer meeting Gandhiji said that while he admitted his impotency regarding the spread of the *ahimsa* of the brave and the strong as distinguished from that of the weak, the admission was not meant to imply that he did not know how

that inestimable virtue was to be cultivated. Consciousness of the living presence of God within one was undoubtedly the first requisite. Acquisition of this consciousness did not require or mean temple-going. The daily recitation, however, carried with it certain well-defined implications. Assuming that the millions of India daily recited at a given time the name of God as Rama, Allah, Khuda, Ahura Mazda and Jehovah but the recitation was not free from drunkenness, debauchery, gambling on the market or in gambling dens, black-marketing etc., the *Ramadhun* was a vain and inglorious effort. One with a wicked heart could never be conscious of the all-purifying presence of God. Therefore it was truer (if it was a fact) to say that India was not ready for the lesson of the *ahimsa* of the strong than that no programme had been devised for the teaching. It would be perfectly just to say that the programme just mentioned for the *ahimsa* of the strong was not as attractive as that devised for the non-violence of the weak had proved to be. He hoped that at least his hearers who daily attended the prayer meetings would lead the way in expressing in their lives the *ahimsa* of the strong.

New Delhi, 22-6-'47
Harijan, 29-6-1947

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OUR OWN FOLLY

A correspondent had asked Gandhiji as to how, having depended on British troops for over a century, India could all of a sudden do without them. Gandhiji's reply was : "Another way of putting the same question would be 'Are you not unfit for Swaraj ?'" He answered the question many years ago. He would give the same answer today. He had not the shadow of a doubt that India would, when the British troops were really withdrawn, feel that a great load had been lifted off her back. No doubt they would feel a little awkward for a day in this time of internal strife and mutual distrust, not always ill-based. But they would feel even as a man feels when he is removed from a stuffy room. This he said not merely from the standpoint of non-violence but even from that of violence. They had to get

out of helpless dependence and learn even to fight to the finish among themselves. It was a terrible lesson to go through. But it was any day better than the present helplessness. He was quite sure that the present Hindu-Muslim enmity was a base manufacture which was destined to die of inanition. The pity undoubtedly was that the disease had invaded the intelligentsia. It did not become respectable on that account. It made the intelligentsia disrespectable. Some of them would live to see the dawn of sanity when they would laugh at their own folly. He only hoped that the British would, upto the last moment, resist the temptation to stay in India for the sake of giving India peace. He wished he could convince them that they never gave India the blessings of peace. It was, as Lord Halifax when he was Viceroy as Lord Irwin had said on a memorable occasion, "the peace of the grave."

Harijan, 6-7-1947

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FRAGRANCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

Another question was: "Does not your non-violence stink in your nostrils?" Gandhiji made bold to say that the fragrance of non-violence to him was never sweeter than when it was today amidst the stink of violence of the most cowardly type that was being displayed in the cities of India such as Lahore, Amritsar and other places. He was sorry to say that he was ashamed of his countrymen, be they Hindu or Muslim. Neither became his enemy because either chose to call himself so. He was aware that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had rendered a disservice to Islam by calling Hindus or better still the Caste Hindus 'our enemies'. He would plead with the so-called Caste Hindus not to wear the cap but unselfishly and bravely prove themselves friends of every Indian because they loved India. There was grave danger of insanity proving infective. Pakistan was there. Why would the Qaid-e-Azam not be happy now that he had got it? Or had the poison gone too deep to be brought under control? Was it a variety of, and that worse than, the atom bomb?

Let those who had eyes, see the thing and avoid it well before India was caught in the poisonous coil.

Harijan, 6-7-1947

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RIGHTS OR DUTIES ?

[The following is from Gandhiji's post-prayer speeches on the 28th and 29th June:—S. N.]

"I want to deal with one great evil that is afflicting society today. The capitalist and the *zamindar* talk of their rights, the labourer on the other hand of his, the prince of his divine right to rule, the ryot of his to resist it. If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos.

"If instead of insisting on rights everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of the ryots to pay respectful obedience to their masters. Whilst it is true that these hereditary inequalities must go as being injurious to the well-being of society, the unabashed assertion of rights of the hitherto down-trodden millions is equally injurious, if not more so to the same well-being. The latter behaviour is probably calculated to injure the millions rather than the few claimants of divine or other rights. They could but die a brave or cowardly death but those few dead would not bring in the orderly life of blissful contentment. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the correlation of rights and duties. I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations sooner discarded the better. A wretched parent who claims obedience from his children without first doing his duty by them excites nothing but contempt. It is distortion of religious precept for a dissolute husband to expect compliance in every respect from his dutiful wife. But the children who flout their parent who is ever ready to do his duty towards them would be considered ungrateful and would harm themselves more than their parent. The same

can be said about husband and wife. If you apply this simple and universal rule to employers and labourers, landlords and tenants, the princes and their subjects, or the Hindus and the Muslims, you will find that the happiest relations can be established in all walks of life without creating disturbance in and dislocation of life and business which you see in India as in the other parts of the world. What I call the law of Satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom."

Taking the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims for his illustration, Gandhiji, resuming his remarks on rights and duties, said on the 29th June:

"What is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and will probably get the expected response. Supposing the Hindus are in a majority in a village with a sprinkling of Muslims in their midst, the duty of the majority towards the few Muslim neighbours is increased manifold, so much so that the few will not feel that their religion makes any difference in the behaviour of the Hindus towards them. The Hindus will *then* earn the right, *not* before, that the Muslims will be natural friends with them and in times of danger both the communities will act as one man. But suppose that the few Muslims do not reciprocate the correct behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty of the many Hindus? Certainly not to overpower them by the brute strength of the many; that will be usurpation of an unearned right. Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour as they would that of their blood brothers. It is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the illustration. I will close it by saying that the application will be exactly the same if the position is reversed. From what I have said it is easy enough to extend the application with profit to the whole of the present state which has become baffling because people do not apply in practice the doctrine of deriving every right from a prior duty well performed.

"The same rule applies to the Princes and the ryots. The former's duty is to act as true servants of the people. They will rule not by right granted by some outside authority, never by the right of the sword. They will rule by right of service, of greater wisdom. They will then have the right to collect taxes voluntarily paid and expect certain services equally voluntarily rendered, not for themselves but for the sake of the people under their care. If they fail to perform this simple and primary duty, the ryots not only owe no return duty but the duty devolves on them of resisting the princely usurpation. It may be otherwise said that the ryots earn the right of resisting the usurpation or misrule. But the resistance will become a crime against man in terms of duty if it takes the form of murder, rapine and plunder. Force that performance of duty naturally generates is the non-violent and invincible force that Satyagraha brings into being."

Harijan, 6-7-1947

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RAMRAJYA AND AHIMSA

The question that was often being put to Gandhiji was, did he ever think that the Swaraj of his dreams was going to be born out of the present regime which was to culminate in full Dominion Status on the 15th of August at the latest? Was he not ashamed of the non-violence of the past thirty years which had resulted in the violence that had been stalking the land? He was sorry to have to confess that he saw no sign of the Kingdom of God being born out of the coming Dominion Status. He hoped that the Dominion Status was offered in order to anticipate the final date of the withdrawal of British rule. Without it they felt unable to devise a scheme whereby the *Quit India* date of 30th June next could be put earlier. Be that as it may, it was open to both the new States as soon as they framed their constitutions to declare complete independence of the exclusive family of British Dominions and aim at a family of independent World States which necessarily ruled out all internal armies. He could not visualize a dog-in-the-manger-policy for India

whereby it would become a menace to world peace, another Japan or Germany calling itself falsely a democracy. Democracy and the military spirit he held to be a contradiction in terms. A democrat relied upon the force not of the arms his State could flaunt in the face of the world but on the moral force his State could put at the disposal of the world. If by India's effort such a world federation of free and independent States was brought into being, the hope of the Kingdom of God, otherwise called *Ramarajya*, might legitimately be entertained. Before that happy event took place, however, the two new States which today were enemies of each other would have to become friends and associates. He was sorry to confess that the signs pointed the contrary way.

The second taunt really was the corollarly of the first and *vice versa*. He had every reason to be ashamed of the result of over thirty years of non-violence so-called. He had already admitted that our non-violence was of the weak. But the weak of heart could not claim to represent any non-violence at all. The proper term was passive resistance. Passive resistance was a preparation for the active resistance of arms. Had it been the non-violence of the strong, the practice of a generation would have made the recent orgies of destruction of life and property impossible. Then there would have been no need for the rationing of cloth and food. If people knew the working of the law of truth and non-violence, they would themselves regulate the matter of shortage. He had never subscribed to the belief that the shortage could not be locally made good. Such a big country like India should disdain to share the world's production of food and cloth when the world was suffering from shortage due to the insensate destruction wrought by the terrible war. All that was needed in India was solid, steady and hard work put in by the millions of India wisely and intelligently directed. There was no dearth of wisdom and skill in the country. Lastly, if there was true grasp of non-violence and truth, they would not look to the Civil Service which, he thought was described by the late Mr. Montagu as a wooden machine. These gentlemen were experts of a kind. They were never employed for the benefit of the nation. They had to keep the foreign rule going somehow or other. And they were too few to handle successfuly the present work of reviving the

drooping spirits of a nation of starving and naked millions. The businessmen, the producers and the scientists should be impressed into willing service for the nation in dire need. Will the servicemen rise to the occasion, will the members of the Government go out of the red-tape rut and woo the public to help themselves? How or why could all this happen if there was no non-violence, no truth in us?

New Delhi, 5-7-'47
Harijan, 13-7-1947

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WHO IS A SOCIALIST ?

I

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of society are equal — none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous

number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins ? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

New Delhi, 6-7-'47
Harijan, 13-7-1947

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SOCIALISM

II

Truth and *ahimsa* must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and *ahimsa* is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic state?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reach-

ed by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

New Delhi, 13-7-'47
Harijan, 20-7-1947

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THE ROOT CAUSE OF PARTITION

Many people come to Gandhiji and express their dissatisfaction over the partition of India. They know that Gandhiji has always been opposed to it. Why does he not give tangible form to his opposition ? they ask. It is wrong for him to say that he is a spent bullet or that the country is not behind him. "Give us the lead and you will see for yourself whether the country is behind you or not." Gandhiji is sometimes amused by such talk. Against whom is he to give the lead ? It was not the British who had partitioned the country. It had been done with the consent of the Congress howsoever reluctantly. There was only one way to avoid the calamity and that was by the non-violence of the brave. But how could the people develop it overnight ? Talking to some friends on this subject he said that the leaders had agreed to the partition as the last resort. They did not feel that they had made a mistake. Rather than let the whole country go to the dogs, they agreed to the partition, hoping to give the country a much needed rest. He felt differently. He had said that he would rather let the whole country be reduced to ashes than yield an inch to violence. But non-violence was his creed. It was not so with the Congress. The Congress had accepted non-violence as a policy. Badshah Khan was the only leader who believed in non-violence as a creed. Even he had not imbibed the doctrine through and through.

"I have admitted my mistake," he continued. "I thought our struggle was based on non-violence, whereas in reality it was no more than passive resistance which essentially is a weapon of the weak. It leads naturally to armed resistance whenever possible." In South Africa the English Chairman of his

meeting, the late Mr. Hosken, had said that he (Gandhiji) was fighting for the cause of the weak. Therefore he was resorting to passive resistance. Gandhiji had contradicted the statement. He had said that they were not weak in the sense the Chairman meant. The struggle in the Transvaal was not passive resistance. It was based on non-violence. The source of their strength was soul force, not physical force.

Intoxicated with his success in South Africa, he came to India. Here too the struggle bore fruit. But he now realized that it was not based on non-violence. If he had known so then, he would not have launched the struggle. But God wanted to take that work from him. So He blurred his vision. It was because their struggle was not non-violent that they today witnessed loot, arson and murder.

A friend interposed that Gandhiji had always maintained that our struggle was based on non-violence, though of the weak.

Gandhiji said that his was a mistaken statement. There was no such thing as non-violence of the weak. Non-violence and weakness was a contradiction in terms. He had never experienced the dark despair that was today within him. He was a born fighter who did not know failure. But he was groping today.

"But why should you feel despondent?" persisted the friend. "I see clearly," replied Gandhiji, "that if the country cannot be turned to non-violence it will be bad for it and the world. It will mean goodbye to freedom. It might even mean a military dictatorship. I am day and night thinking how non-violence of the brave can be cultivated.

"I said at the Asiatic Conference that I hoped the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world. I often wonder if that hope will materialize."

New Delhi, 18-7-'47
Harijan, 27-7-1947

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DIVISION OF THE ARMY

Gandhiji referred with intense feeling to the division of the army. He could not understand why they could not remain united for the object of facing foreign aggression. The present mode of division might even lead to internal warfare between the two armies who might look upon themselves as rivals. That would be a tragedy too deep for tears. As a matter of fact division of the army was a factor which would weaken the defence forces. It was up to them to ponder deeply over this. He hoped that even if they had not learnt the lesson of *ahimsa* during the last 30 years, they had at any rate learnt not to live as slaves of anyone — not only of the British. If they had, what need of armies anywhere? This was the lesson he was trying to teach the Hindus in Noakhali and the Muslims in Bihar. If they had the personal courage he would not mind if they resisted opression even violently. Naturally, he would always plead for non-violent resistance because the latter meant that God was their sole Protector. Violent resistance invariably meant the aid of the sword which was at best a poor weapon of defence.

New Delhi, 14-7-'47
Harijan, 27-7-1947

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ARMY AND FREEDOM

A friend had asked if the division of the army and the retention of British Officers had Gandhiji's approval. The friend should first ask whether Gandhiji approved of the army at all. As it was, the military expenditure in free India would probably be more, not less, than before. Gandhiji could never be a party to it. He viewed the military with apprehension. Could it be that India would also have to pass through the stage of military rule? For years they had said that they did not want any army. He stood by that statement even today, but the others did not. A new generation had set in. Congressmen were not bound by what they had done during India's bondage. No blame could be imputed to them for the change. He had mistaken passive resistance for non-violence. There was violence in people's hearts. The British Government's imminent withdrawal had set free the bottled violence which was finding free vent against their own kith and kin. Almost every province wanted military assistance. If they did not wake up betimes, there was even danger of military dictatorship being established. Was that freedom?

New Delhi, 23-7-'47
Harijan, 3-8-1947

THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

Gandhiji said in his after-prayer speech :

It is said that my speeches nowadays are depressing. Some even suggest that I should not speak at all. This multitude of advisers reminds me of a painter who had exposed his painting in a shop window without glass inviting critics to mark the parts they did not like. The result was a daub. The painter had simply tried to show that it was impossible to please all parties. He was, therefore, satisfied that he had painted a good picture. His business was to produce a work which satisfied his artistic taste. Mine is a similar case. I hope I never speak for the sake of speaking. I speak because I feel that I have something to say to the people. It is true that I do not agree with what many of my closest friends have done or are doing. Whilst I am in Delhi and I have an opinion about some current events, I cannot help giving that opinion. And what are the differences that matter ? If you analyse them you would find only one fundamental difference to which all the others could be traced. Non-violence is my creed. It never was of the Congress. With the Congress it has always been a policy. A policy takes the shape of a creed whilst it lasts, no longer. The Congress had every right to change it when it found it necessary. A creed can never admit of any change. Now though according to the Congress constitution the policy abides, the practice has undoubtedly altered the policy. Technicians may quarrel with the fact. You and I cannot, must not. Why should not the makers of the present Congress change their policy in fact ? The law will take care of itself. It should also be noted that in the constitution the word *peaceful* is used, not *non-violent*.

In Bombay when the Congress met in 1934 I tried hard to have the word *peaceful* replaced by *non-violent* and I failed. Therefore, it is open to give the word *peaceful* a meaning probably less than that of *non-violent*. I see none. But my opinion is irrelevant. It is for the *savants* to determine the difference, if any. All that you and I need to realize is that the

Congress practice is not non-violent today in the accepted sense of the term. If the Congress was pledged to the policy of non-violence, there would be no army supported by it. But she sports an army which may eat up the civilians and establish military rule in India unless the people listen to me. Am I to give up all hope of their ever listening to me ? I cannot do it whilst there is breath left in me. And if the people do not wish to listen to my non-violent dirge, there is no reason for critics to dissuade me from speaking to the public.

Let me make one thing clear. I have frankly and fully admitted that what we practised during the past thirty years was not non-violent resistance but passive resistance which only the weak offer because they are unable, not unwilling, to offer armed resistance. If we knew the use of non-violent resistance which only those with hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other, and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions who know no religion but that of the one and only God who appears to them in the guise of the necessaries of life. Not for them the sanguinary strife or the cinema pictures showing them how efficiently to cut one another's throats !

New Delhi, 15-7-'47
Harijan, 27-7-1947

A DIFFICULT QUESTION

A friend came to Gandhiji the other day and placed his difficulties before him. The Congress governments were being warned not to trust the Muslims. The latter might act as saboteurs and fifth columnists. Jinnah Saheb had congratulated the Muslims of the non-Pakistan areas for their labours and sacrifices which had made Pakistan a reality. Some members of the Muslim League were openly saying that they would not be content with the truncated Pakistan that had been secured. Their eyes were on Delhi, Agra, Ajmer, Aligarh. Some even dreamt of dominating the whole of India. It was a vain dream; yet what guarantee was there that the Muslims in the Union of India would not use their energies and influence towards the realization of that dream ? Was it right on the part of the Congress governments to take the risk of trusting them ?

Gandhiji's reply was clear and decisive. The Congress governments could not discriminate against anyone on grounds of religion. "My eldest son has often come to me saying, 'I will be good in future. I will not touch wine.' I tell him, 'Though I do not trust you, I shall give you a chance.' He has not been able to keep to his word so far. Yet if he comes again, I will not turn him out and I shall hope that he will be as good as his word, until I know that he has come back only to deceive me. We must trust the Muslims in the same way and, at the same time, be vigilant."

"But if we have suspicion in our minds, will it not be reflected in our actions ?" asked the friend.

"No," said Gandhiji. "You must not act on suspicion. Look at the British. How much harm they have done to India! I confess that I am not yet wholly free from suspicion. I wonder if they can really change completely. I trust Lord Mountbatten. The world cannot go on without trust. The minorities must realize that they have to be loyal to the State under which they live. If they prove unworthy, the State can take necessary action. But you must not prejudge them. Why die before death ?"

"We must, however, be prepared to fight the danger," persisted another friend.

"Yes," said Gandhiji. "The real preparation lies in purging ourselves of our inherent weaknesses—selfishness and disunity."

New Delhi, 18-7-'47
Harijan, 27-7-1947

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PUNISHMENT FOR EVIL-DOERS

A correspondent writes: "You regard yourself as a practical idealist. What is happening today is inhuman. Will you tell me how your practical *ahimsa* can work against these evil-doers?"

I must plead guilty to having called myself a practical idealist. I have tried ever to practise as I have preached, be it ever so imperfectly. Who are the evil-doers of your conception? Are they as described by the Sage Manu? All these are not today done to death. Today there is a movement on foot in the world for the abolition of capital punishment. Indeed an attempt, worthy in my opinion, is being made to convert prisons into hospitals and reformatories for the treatment of criminals as if they were diseased persons. The upshot of all I want to convey is that every work labelled as scripture is not necessarily so. Moreover a scripture to be scientific lends itself to emendations as the times may really require. They must progress with the times if they are to live in the lives of the people. The changeless and universal fundamentals are always very few. They do not require learned treatises to be described. The treatises are built upon these immovable rocks.

Further, it is not everyone who is entitled to punish evil-doers. In a decent society it is always reserved for the State. It enacts laws and appoints judges to judge in accordance with them. If such were not the case, we would all bid fair to become evil-doers. The assassinations in Burma were truly fearful. Now we know for certain that the motive behind them was political. I am quite sure that the assassins believed that they were doing a virtuous act in murdering those patriots

whom they regarded as evil-doers. Did not our terrorists think likewise? They told me that they sincerely believed that those whom they did to death were evil-doers of Manu's description. These friends never thought until they had seen new light, that they had done anything wrong in shooting their victims. Hence have I argued that those who take the law into their own hands and presume to judge others are themselves the guilty ones. Departure from *ahimsa* is possible, if at all, when justice is awarded by properly constituted impartial tribunals. What is happening today comes under the definition of evil.

New Delhi, 22-7-'47
Harijan, 3-8-1947

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GOONDAISM, CRUDE AND SUBTLE

Gandhiji devoted the whole of his prayer address at Sodepur to the situation in Calcutta. His destination, he said, was Noakhali but he had been listening the whole day long to the woes of Calcutta. Some Muslim friends and also some Hindus complained that they (Hindus) seemed to have gone mad, not that the Muslims had become wiser. But now that the Muslim police and officials were almost withdrawn and replaced by Hindus, the Hindus had begun to believe that they were now free to do what they liked as the Muslims were reported to have done under the League Ministry. He was not going to examine what was done under the League Ministry. His purpose was undoubtedly to know what his co-worker Dr. Ghosh's Ministry was doing. Was it true that the Muslims were living in terror? If it was at all true, it was a severe reflection on the Congress Ministry. He was rightly asked before he went up to Noakhali to tarry in Calcutta to 'pour a pot of water over the raging fire' that was burning Calcutta. He would love to give his life if thereby he could contribute to the quenching of mob fury. He would never be able to subscribe to the theory that the doings in Calcutta were the result of *goondaism*. He held that the crude open *goondaism* was a reflection of the subtle *goondaism* they were harbouring within. Hence, it was the duty of the Gov-

ernments to hold themselves responsible for the acts of the *goondas* so-called. He hoped that Calcutta would not present the disgraceful spectacle of hot *goondaism* when they were entering upon full responsibility.

Sodepur, 10-8-'47
Harijan, 24-8-1947

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MIRACLE OR ACCIDENT?

Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy and I are living together in a Muslim *manzil* in Beliaghata where Muslims have been reported to be sufferers. We occupied the house on Wednesday the 13th instant and on the 14th it seemed as if there never had been bad blood between the Hindus and the Muslims. In their thousands they began to embrace one another and they began to pass freely through places which were considered to be points of danger by one party or the other. Indeed, Hindus were taken to their *masjids* by their Muslim brethren and the latter were taken by their Hindu brethren to the *mandirs*. Both with one voice shouted 'Jai Hind' or 'Hindu-Muslims! Be One'. As I have said above, we are living in a Muslim's house and Muslim volunteers are attending to our comforts with the greatest attention. Muslim volunteers do the cooking. Many were eager to come from the Khadi Pratishthan for attendance, but I prevented them. I was determined that we should be fully satisfied with whatever the Muslim brothers and sisters were able to give for our creature comforts and I must say that the determination has resulted in unmixed good. Here in the compound numberless Hindus and Muslims continue to stream in shouting the favourite slogans. One might almost say that the joy of fraternization is leaping up from hour to hour.

Is this to be called a miracle or an accident? By whatever name it may be described, it is quite clear that all the credit that is being given to me from all sides is quite undeserved; nor can it be said to be deserved by Shaheed Saheb. This sudden upheaval is not the work of one or two men. We are toys in the

hands of God. He makes us dance to His tune. The utmost, therefore, that man can do is to refrain from interfering with the dance and that he should tender full obedience to his Maker's will. Thus considered, it can be said that in this miracle He has used us two as His instruments and as for myself I only ask whether the dream of my youth is to be realized in the evening of my life.

For those who have full faith in God, this is neither a miracle nor an accident. A chain of events can be clearly seen to show that the two were being prepared, unconsciously to themselves, for fraternization. In this process our advent on the scene enabled the onlooker to give us credit for the consummation of the happy event.

Be that as it may, the delirious happenings remind me of the early days of the Khilafat Movement. The fraternization then burst on the public as a new experience. Moreover, we had then the Khilafat and Swaraj as our twin goals. Today we have nothing of the kind. We have drunk the poison of mutual hatred and so this nectar of fraternization tastes all the sweeter and the sweetness should never wear out.

In the present exuberance one hears also the cry of 'Long Live Hindustan and Pakistan' from the joint throats of the Hindus and the Muslims. I think it is quite proper. Whatever was the cause for the agreement, three parties accepted Pakistan. If then the two are not enemies one of the other, and here evidently they are not, surely there is nothing wrong in the above cry. Indeed, if the two have become friends, not to wish long life to both the States would probably be an act of disloyalty.

(Adapted from the original in Gujarati)

Beliaghata, 16-8-'47
Harijan, 24-8-1947

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SECULAR

Reverend Kellas, Principal of the Scottish Church College, came to see Gandhiji yesterday with some members of his staff. The principal question discussed was in connection with the relation between education, religion and the State. Gandhiji expressed the opinion that the State should undoubtedly be secular. Everyone living in it should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance, so long as the citizen obeyed the common law of the land. There should be no interference with missionary effort, but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the State as it did during the foreign regime.

While discussing these matters with Principal Kellas, Gandhiji incidentally remarked that although we had thrown overboard British political supremacy, we had not yet been able to throw overboard the cultural one. In his characteristic style, he said, "We have discarded foreign power, not the unseen foreign influence." What he would like the new India of his dream to do was to lay the foundation of a new life in keeping with its natural surroundings. In every State in the world today, violence, even if it were for so-called defensive purposes only, enjoyed a status which was in conflict with the better elements of life. "The organization of the best in society", was the aim to which new India should dedicate herself; and this could be done only if we succeeded in demolishing the status which had been given to *goondaism* today.

One of the scientist members of the staff then asked Gandhiji what scientific men should do if they were now asked by the free Indian Government to engage in researches in furtherance of war and the atom bomb ? Gandhiji promptly replied, "Scientists to be worth the name should resist such a State unto death."

Calcutta, 17-8-'47
Harijan, 24-8-1947

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NON-VIOLENCE AND FREE INDIA

There was a small gathering of local students the other day in Gandhiji's camp at Beliaghata. Gandhiji first asked them if any of them had taken part in the riots, to which they replied in the negative. Whatever they had done was in self-defence; hence it was no part of the riot.

This gave Gandhiji an opportunity of speaking on some of the vital problems connected with non-violence. He said that mankind had all along tried to justify violence and war in terms of unavoidable self-defence. It was a simple rule that the violence of the aggressor could only be defeated by superior violence of the defender. All over the world, men had thus been caught in a mad race for armaments, and no one yet knew at what point of time the world would be really safe enough for turning the sword into the plough. Mankind, he stated, had not yet mastered the true art of self-defence.

But great teachers, who had practised what they preached, had successfully shown that true defence lay along the path of non-retaliation. It might sound paradoxical ; but this is what he meant. Violence always thrived on counter-violence. The aggressor had always a purpose behind his attack ; he wanted something to be done, some object to be surrendered by the defender. Now, if the defender steeled his heart and was determined not to surrender even one inch, and at the same time to resist the temptation of matching the violence of the aggressor by violence, the latter could be made to realize in a short while that it would not be paying to punish the other party and his will could not be imposed in that way. This would involve suffering. It was this unalloyed self-suffering which was the truest form of self-defence which knew no surrender.

Someone might ask that if through such non-resistance the defender was likely to lose his life, how could it be called self-defence ? Jesus lost his life on the Cross and the Roman Pilate won. Gandhiji did not agree. Jesus had won, as the world's history had abundantly shown. What did it matter if the body

was dissolved in the process, so long as by the Christ's act of non-resistance, the forces of good were released in society ?

This art of true self-defence by means of which man gained his life by losing it, had been mastered and exemplified in the history of individuals. The method had not been perfected for application by large masses of mankind. India's Satyagraha was a very imperfect experiment in that direction. Hence, during the Hindu-Muslim quarrel it proved a failure on the whole.

Two or three days ago, before this meeting with the students, Gandhiji unburdened his heart in this respect to Professor Stuart Nelson, who had come to see him before he left for his college in America. Professor Nelson asked him why it was that Indians who had more or less successfully gained independence through peaceful means, were now unable to check the tide of civil war through the same means ? Gandhiji replied that it was indeed a searching question which he must answer. He confessed that it had become clear to him that what he had mistaken for Satyagraha was not Satyagraha but passive resistance — a weapon of the weak. Indians harboured ill-will and anger against their erstwhile rulers, while they pretended to resist them non-violently. Their resistance was, therefore, inspired by violence and not by regard for the man in the British, whom they should convert through Satyagraha.

Now that the British were voluntarily quitting India, apparent non-violence had gone to pieces in a moment. The attitude of violence which we had secretly harboured, in spite of the restraint imposed by the Indian National Congress, now recoiled upon us and made us fly at each other's throats when the question of the distribution of power came up. If India could now discover a way of sublimating the force of violence which had taken a communal turn, and turning it into constructive, peaceful ways, whereby differences of interests could be liquidated, it would be a great day indeed.

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that it was indeed true that many English friends had warned him that the so-called non-violent non-cooperation of India was not really non-violent. It was the passivity of the weak and not the non-violence of the stout in heart who would never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests,

who would ever try to convert and not coerce their adversary.

Gandhiji proceeded to say that this was indeed true. He had all along laboured under an illusion. But he was never sorry for it. He realized that if his vision were not covered by that illusion, India would never have reached the point which it had today.

India was now free, and the reality was now clearly revealed to him. Now that the burden of subjection had been lifted, all the forces of good had to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence in order to settle human conflicts whether it was between two States or between two sections of the same people. He had yet the faith that India would rise to the occasion and prove to the world that the birth of two new States would be, not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind. It was the duty of Free India to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving collective conflicts, if its freedom was going to be really worth while.

Calcutta, 20-8-'47
Harijan, 31-8-1947

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HOW TO SAVE THE COW ?

There is serious ignorance about the place of the cow in Hinduism and in the economy of Indian life. At the same time that India has become independent of foreign rule, by common consent it has been cut into twain so as to induce the untenable belief that one part is popularly described as Hindu India and the other part as Muslim India. Like all superstitions, this of Hindu and Muslim India will die hard. The fact is that the Indian Union and Pakistan belong equally to all who call themselves and are, sons of the soil, irrespective of their creed or colour.

Nevertheless, a large number of vocal Hindus have begun to believe the superstition that the Union belongs to the Hindus and that, therefore, they should enforce their belief by law even among non-Hindus. Hence an emotional wave is sweeping

the country, in order to secure legislation prohibiting the slaughter of cows within the Union.

In this state, which I hold, is based on ignorance, claiming to be a knowing lover and devotee, second to none in India of the cow, I must try in the best manner I can to dispel the ignorance.

Let us at the outset realize that cow worship in the religious sense is largely confined to Gujarat, Marwad, the United Provinces and Bihar. Marwadis and Gujaratis being enterprizing merchants, have succeeded in making the greatest noise without at the same time devoting their business talent to the solution of the very difficult question of conserving the cattle wealth of India.

It is obviously wrong legally to enforce one's religious practice on those who do not share that religion.

In so far as the pure economic necessity of cow protection is concerned, it can be easily secured if the question was considered on that ground alone. In that event all the dry cattle, the cows who give less milk than their keep, and the aged and unfit cattle would be slaughtered without a second thought. This soulless economy has no place in India, although the inhabitants of this land of paradoxes may be, indeed, are guilty of many soulless acts.

Then how can the cow be saved without having to kill her off when she ceases to give the economic quantity of milk or when she becomes otherwise an uneconomic burden? The answer to the question can be summed up as follows:

1. By the Hindus performing their duty towards the cow and her progeny. If they did so, our cattle would be the pride of India and the world. The contrary is the case today.

2. By learning the science of cattle breeding. Today there is perfect anarchy in this work.

3. By replacing the present cruel method of castration by the humane method practised in the West.

4. By thorough reform of the *pinjarapoles* of India which are today, as a rule, managed ignorantly and without any plan by men who do not know their work.

5. When these primary things are done, it will be found that the Muslims will, of their own accord, recognize the necessity, if only for the sake of their Hindu brethren, of not slaughtering cattle for beef or otherwise.

The reader will observe that behind the foregoing requirements lies one thing and that is *ahimsa*, otherwise known as universal compassion. If that supreme thing is realized, everything else becomes easy. Where there is *ahimsa*, there is infinite patience, inner calm, discrimination, self-sacrifice and true knowledge. Cow protection is not an easy thing. Much money is wasted in its name. Nevertheless, in the absence of *ahimsa* the Hindus have become destroyers instead of saviours of the cow. It is even more difficult than the removal of foreign rule from India.

Calcutta, 22-8-'47

[*Note*: The average quantity of milk that the cow in India yields is said to be roughly 2 lbs. per day, that of New Zealand 14 lbs., of England 15 lbs., of Holland 20 lbs. The index figure for health goes up in prcportion to the increase in the yield of milk.

23-8-'47 —M. K. G.]

Harijan, 31-8-1947

NON-VIOLENT LABOUR AS MAGNET

Gandhiji said that the present was his second visit to Motiaburz. The first was when Maulana Saheb Abul Kalam Azad and he visited them years ago because there was a fight between Hindu and Muslim workmen. Fortunately when they reached the scene of trouble, it was almost over but they got undeserved credit. The present was a happy occasion. The Hindus and the Muslims had adjusted their differences and had become friends. He hoped that this was a lasting friendship. He wanted to say a few words to the workmen in the working men's locality. He hoped that there was no distinction between the Hindus and the Muslims in labour. They were all labourers. If the communal canker entered the labour ranks, both would weaken labour and therefore, themselves and the country. Labour was a great leveller of all distinctions. If they realized that truth, he would like them to go a step further. Labour, because it chose to remain unintelligent, either became subservient or insolently believed in damaging capitalists' goods and machinery or even in killing capitalists. He was a labourer by conviction and a *bhangi*. As such his interests were bound with those of labour. As such he wished to tell them that violence would never save them. They would be killing the goose that laid the golden egg. What he had been saying for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. It was labour which extracted precious ore from the bowels of the earth. He could quite conceive labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour. They could work wonders in co-operation. But that could happen only when labour was intelligent enough to co-operate with itself and then offer co-operation with capital on terms of honourable equality. Capital controlled labour because it knew the art of combination. Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in co-operation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom ocean greyhounds. Similarly,

if all the labourers in any part of the world combined together, they could not be tempted by higher wages or helplessly allow themselves to be attracted for, say, a pittance. A true and non-violent combination of labour would act like a magnet attracting to it all the needed capital. Capitalists would then exist only as trustees. When that happy day dawned, there would be no difference between capital and labour. The labour will have ample food, good and sanitary dwellings, all the necessary education for their children, ample leisure for self-education and proper medical assistance.

Calcutta, 28-8-'47
Harijan, 7-9-1947

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INFALLIBLE AHIMSA

Q. You have often stated while you were in Noakhali that failure of your mission there, would be the failure of your own *ahimsa* and not of *ahimsa* itself. In the light of what has been achieved here (Calcutta), do you think that your *ahimsa* has succeeded or is on the way to success ?

A. It is a correct statement that has been attributed to me. *Ahimsa* is always infallible. When, therefore, it appears to have failed, the failure is due to the inaptitude of the votary. I have never felt that my *ahimsa* has failed in Noakhali, nor can it be said that it has succeeded. It is on its trial. And when I talk of my *ahimsa* I do not think of it as limited to myself. It must include all my co-workers in Noakhali. Success or failure would, therefore, be attributable to the aggregate of the activities of my co-workers and myself.

What I have said about Noakhali applies to Calcutta. It is too early to state that the application of *ahimsa* to the communal problem in this great city has succeeded beyond doubt. As I have already remarked, it is wrong to contend that the establishment of friendliness between the two communities was a miracle. Circumstances were ready and Shaheed Saheb and I appeared on the scene to take the credit for what has happened.

Anyway, it is premature to predicate anything about the application. The first thing naturally is that we, the two partners, have one mind and are believers in *ahimsa*. That being assured, I would say that if we know the science and its application, it is bound to succeed.

Calcutta, 31-8-'47
Harijan, 7-9-1947

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THE NATIONAL FLAG

The *Chakra* figuring in India's National Flag has been widely described as the *Ashoka-Chakra*. But this description is not historically quite correct. It was not Ashoka who invented this *Chakra*. It was first conceived by his great *Guru*, the Buddha, who called it the *Dhamma-Chakka* in his first teaching at Sarnath which is known in Pali as the *Dhamma-Chakka-Pabattana-Sutta*. The meaning of this term is the inauguration of the Kingdom (*Chakka*) of Righteousness, the Rule of Right as against Might — what Gandhiji would call *Rama Rajya*, the ideal for which India stands. The Buddha's *Dhamma-Chakka*, again, is the successor of Vishnu's *Sudarshana Chakra*, the Cosmic Circle, within which is comprehended all that is, animate or inanimate (*Akhanda mandalakaram vyaptam yena chara-charam* — अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।). Thus the *Chakra* is possessed of a deep spiritual meaning. It was Ashoka's part to translate into stone in terms of visible form the Buddha's great ideal of *Dhamma-Chakka* at the place where it was first presented by him. Finally, the *Chukra* may be taken in Gandhiji's sense as a *Charkha*, the symbol of India's traditional economic system through the ages.

Radha Kumud Mookerji

[Professor Radha Kumud Mookerji brought the above note personally and on my drawing attention to the popular meaning of the *Sudarshana Chakra* as a symbol of violence, he said it was wholly wrong.

—M. K. G.]

Calcutta, 31-8-'47
Harijan, 7-9-1947

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PRESS STATEMENT

I regret to have to report to you that last night some young men brought to the compound a bandaged man. He was reported to have been attacked by some Muslims. The Prime Minister had him examined and the report was that he had no marks of stabbing, which he was said to have received. The seriousness of the injury, however, is not the chief point. What I want to emphasize is that these young men tried to become judges and executioners.

This was about 10 p.m. Calcutta time. They began to shout at the top of their voices. My sleep was disturbed but I tried to lie quiet, not knowing what was happening. I heard the window panes being smashed. I had lying on either side of me two very brave girls. They would not sleep, and without my knowledge, for my eyes were closed, they went among the small crowd and tried to pacify them. Thank God, the crowd did not do any harm to them. The old Muslim lady in the house endearingly called Bi Amma and a young Muslim stood near my matting, I suppose, to protect me from harm.

The noise continued to swell. Some had entered the central hall, and began to knock open the many doors. I felt that I must get up and face the angry crowd. I stood at the threshold of one of the doors. Friendly faces surrounded me and would not let me move forward. My vow of silence admitted of my breaking it on such occasions and I broke it and began to appeal to the angry young men to be quiet. I asked the Bengali grand-daughter-in-law to translate my few words into Bengali. All to no purpose. Their ears were closed against reason.

I clasped my hands in the Hindu fashion nothing doing. More window panes began to crack. The friendly ones in the crowd tried to pacify the crowd. There were police officers. Be it said to their credit that they did not try to exercise authority. They too clasped their hands in appeal. A *lathi* blow missed me and everybody round me. A brick aimed at me hurt a

Muslim friend standing by. The two girls would not leave me and held on to me to the last. Meanwhile the Police Superintendent and his officers came in. They too did not use force. They appealed to me to retire. Then there was a chance of their stilling the young men. After a time the crowd melted.

What happened outside the compound gate I do not know except that the police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd. Meanwhile, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Ananda Babu and Dr. Nripen walked in and after some discussion left. Happily, Shaheed Saheb had gone home to prepare for tomorrow's proposed departure for Noakhali. In view of the above ugly incident, which no one could tell where it would lead to, I could not think of leaving Calcutta for Noakhali.

What is the lesson of the incident ? It is clear to me that if India is to retain her dearly-won independence all men and women must completely forget lynch law. What was attempted was an indifferent imitation of it. If Muslims misbehaved, the complainants could, if they would not go to the ministers, certainly go to me or my friend, Shaheed Saheb. The same thing applies to Muslim complainants. There is no way of keeping the peace in Calcutta or elsewhere if the elementary rule of civilized society is not observed. Let them not think of the savagery of the Punjab or outside India. The recognition of the golden rule of never taking the law into one's own hands has no exceptions.

My Secretary, Dev Prakash, in Patna, wires: 'Public agitated Punjab happenings. Feel statement necessary impressing duty of public and the Press.' Shri Dev Prakash is never unduly agitated. There must be some unguarded word by the Press. If that is so, at this time when we are sitting on a powder magazine, the Fourth Estate has to be extra-wise and reticent. Unscrupulousness will act as a lighted match. I hope every editor and reporter will realize his duty to the full.

One thing I must mention. I have an urgent message calling me to the Punjab. I hear all kinds of rumours about recrudescence of trouble in Calcutta. I hope they are exaggerated, if not quite baseless. The citizens of Calcutta have to reassure me that there would be nothing wrong in Calcutta and that peace, once restored, will not be broken.

From the very first day of peace, that is August 14th last, I have been saying that the peace might only be a temporary lull. There was no miracle. Will the foreboding prove true and will Calcutta again lapse into the law of the jungle? Let us hope not, let us pray to the Almighty that He will touch our hearts and ward off the recurrence of insanity.

Since the foregoing was written, i.e., about 4 o'clock, during silence, I have come to know fairly well the details of what has happened in various parts of the city. Some of the places which were safe till yesterday have suddenly become unsafe. Several deaths have taken place. I saw two bodies of very poor Muslims. I saw also some wretched-looking Muslims being carted away to a place of safety. I quite see that last night's incidents so fully described above, pale into insignificance before this flare-up. Nothing that I may do in the way of going about in the open conflagration could possibly arrest it.

I have told the friends who saw me in the evening what their duty is. What part am I to play in order to stop it? The Sikhs and the Hindus must not forget what the East Punjab has done during these few days. Now the Muslims in the West Punjab have begun the mad career. It is said that the Sikhs and the Hindus are enraged over the Punjab happenings.

I have adverted above to an urgent call for me to go to the Punjab. But now that the Calcutta bubble seems to have burst, with what face can I go to the Punjab? The weapon which has hitherto proved infallible for me is fasting. To put an appearance before an yelling crowd does not always work. It certainly did not last night. What my word in person cannot do, my fast may. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements in the Punjab if it does in Calcutta. I therefore, begin fasting from 8-15 to-night to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta. I shall, as usual permit myself to add salt and soda bicarb to the water I may wish to drink during the fast.

If the people of Calcutta wish me to proceed to the Punjab and help the people there, they have to enable me to break the fast as early as may be.

Calcutta, 1-9-'47
Harijan, 14-9-1947

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IN CALCUTTA

After a period of nearly six months I had the privilege of seeing once again the old, familiar face, of hearing the sound of his old familiar voice when with my friend and colleague Shri Charubhushan Chowdhary I came down to Calcutta to apprise Gandhiji of the situation that was developing in Noakhali and to seek his advice. Although Calcutta was apparently in an ecstasy of communal amity, his mind, uncannily sensitive to the hidden lie in the soul, was anything but restful. After some hesitation he decided to go to Noakhali in spite of the alarming news which continued to pour from the Punjab. "Shall I start tomorrow morning or the day after tomorrow?" he asked those around him and the latter day was fixed for departure. That evening, He who keeps watch when humanity's vision fails, gave the warning signal. "My resolve to go to Noakhali has collapsed after this evening's happenings," he told me when I saw him that night. "I cannot go to Noakhali or for that matter anywhere when Calcutta is in flames. Today's incident to me is a sign and a warning from God. You have for the time being, therefore, to return to Noakhali without me. You can tell the people of Noakhali that if my colleagues for any reason cannot be there, they will find me, surely, in their midst."

And then casually he hinted that if the conflagration spread, he would have no alternative but to fast. "Have I not often said that there is yet another fast in store for me?" The next day was his day of silence. Ugly news continued to pour in. Several deputations waited on him in the course of the day to consult him as to what they should do to quench the fire. "Go in the midst of the rioters and prevent them from indulging in madness or get killed in the attempt. But do not come back alive to report failure. The situation calls for sacrifice on the part of top rankers. So far the unknown, nameless rank and file alone have been the victims of the holocaust with the one exception of the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. That is not enough."

Even as he uttered these words, he was cogitating within himself, as to whether he came into the picture which he was presenting to them. For he added, "Of course, I cannot do today what I have told them to do. I will not be permitted to. I saw that yesterday. Everybody will protect me from harm if I went in the midst of the maddened crowd. I may drop down from sheer physical exhaustion — that is nothing. It won't do for a soldier to be exhausted in the midst of battle." But inaction in a crisis is not in Gandhiji's nature. When a dear old friend saw him that night his mind was already made up. "You don't expect me to approve of your proposed step," remarked the friend with his usual affectionate banter as he perused Gandhiji's statement setting forth his reasons for going on a fast which the latter had kept ready against his arrival. Together they took stock of the situation thrashing out the question in the minutest detail.

"Can you fast against the *goondas* ?" argued the friend.

"The conflagration has been caused not by the *goondas* but by those who have *become goondas.* It is we who make *goondas.* Without our sympathy and passive support, the *goondas* would have no legs to stand upon. I want to touch the hearts of those who are behind the *goondas.*"

"But must you launch your fast at this stage ?" finally argued the friend. "Why not wait and watch a little ?"

To this Gandhiji's reply was that the fast had to be now or never. "It would be too late afterwards. The minority Muslims cannot be left in a perilous state. My fast has to be preventive if it is to be any good."

"I know I shall be able to tackle the Punjab too if I can control Calcutta," he continued. "But if I falter now, the conflagration may spread and soon, I can see clearly, two or three Powers will be upon us and thus will end our short-lived dream of independence."

"But supposing you die, the conflagration would be worse," argued the friend.

"At least I won't be there to witness it. I shall have done my bit. More is not given a man to do," replied Gandhiji.

The friend capitulated.

"But why add sour lemon juice to water, if you are to put yourself entirely in God's hands ?" he (the friend) permitted

himself to think aloud as he read that part of the statement where Gandhiji had allowed himself that latitude.

"You are right," quickly replied Gandhiji. "I allowed it out of my weakness. It jarred on me even as I wrote it. A Satyagrahi must hope to survive his conditional fast by a timely fulfilment of the condition."

And so the portion referring to the addition of sour lime juice to water to be taken during the fast was scored out and the unadulterated venture of faith commenced.

This was on Monday night. Two days later a prominent member of the Calcutta Muslim League waited on him to plead with him to give up the fast. "Your very presence in our midst is an asset to us. It is the guarantee of our safety. Do not deprive us of it," he added.

"My presence did not check the rowdies the other day. My word seemed to have lost all efficacy so far as they were concerned. My fast will now be broken only when the conflagration ends and the pristine peace of the last fifteen days returns. If the Muslims really love me and regard me as an asset, they can demonstrate their faith by refusing to give way to the instinct of revenge and retaliation even if the whole of Calcutta goes mad. In the meantime, my ordeal must continue."

The friend retired with a heavy heart. Added Gandhiji after he had left, "Let the evil-doers desist from evil, not to save my life, but as a result of a true heart change. Let all understand that a make-believe peace cannot satisfy me. I do not want a temporary lull to be followed by a worse conflagration. In that event I shall have to go on an *unconditional* fast unto death."

Then the miracle happened. As the leaden hours crept by and drop by drop strength ebbed out of the frail little man on the fasting bed, it caused a deep churning up in the hearts of all concerned, bringing the hidden lie to the surface. People came to Gandhiji and confessed to him what they would not have uttered to any living ear. Hindus and Muslims combined in an all-out effort to save the precious life that was being offered as ransom for disrupted peace between brother and brother. Mixed processions, consisting of all communities, issued forth and paraded through the affected parts of the city

to restore communal harmony. A group of about fifty people, credited with the power to control the turbulent elements in the city, saw Gandhiji on the 4th instant and gave an undertaking that they would immediately bring the trouble-makers under check. They told Gandhiji that they had already traced and put under restraint the ringleaders who had organized the rowdyism in his camp on Sunday last, including the person who had hurled the stick that had narrowly missed hitting him. They would all surrender themselves to him and take whatever punishment might be meted out to them. Would not Gandhiji on the strength of that assurance now break his fast, so that they might be able to go to work unburdened by the oppression of the fast? they asked. If not, what was his condition for breaking the fast? In reply Gandhiji told them that he would break his fast only when they could assure him that there would never again be recrudescence of communal madness in the city even though the whole of West Bengal and, for that matter, India might go forth into a blaze and the Muslims themselves would come and tell him that they now felt safe and secure and, therefore, he need not further prolong his fast. He did not expect, he proceeded to explain, to be able to control all the *goondas* in the city, though he would love to, as he had not the requisite degree of purity, detachment and steadfastness of mind. But if he could not even make them purge themselves of the communal virus, he would feel that life was not worth living and he would not care to prolong it. They had referred to the oppression of his fast. He could not understand that. Why should they have a feeling of oppression if what they had told him came right from their hearts? If a single step is taken under pressure of the fast, not from conviction, it would cause oppression; but there should be no oppression if there was complete co-operation between the head and the heart. "The function of my fast is to purify, to release our energies by overcoming our inertia and mental sluggishness, not to paralyse us or to render us inactive."

"My fast isolates the forces of evil; the moment they are isolated they die, for evil by itself has no legs to stand upon. I expect you, therefore," he concluded, "to work with even greater vigour under the instigation of my fast, not to feel its oppression."

The deputation went back realizing that it was not fair to ask him to give up his fast unless they could deliver the goods. Later in the afternoon a number of those who had led the disturbances in his camp on Sunday night, came to him and made their surrender with what to all intents appeared to be genuine contrition.

That evening, another deputation of prominent citizens of Calcutta representing all communities, including Shaheed Saheb, Shri N. C. Chatterjee and Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib, waited on him. They told him that they had been to all the affected parts of the city and there was quiet everywhere. They had every reason to hope that there would be no recrudescence of trouble which was not communal really but was the work of the *goondas*. They requested him to break his fast. Gandhiji mildly rebuked them for the habit of taking refuge behind moral alibis by blaming it all on the *goondas*. It was a dangerous expedient. He showed by citing personal experiences of the days of his boyhood how it is the cowardice or passive sympathy of the average citizen or the "man with a stake" that gives the so-called *goondas* the power to do mischief. "My fast should make you more vigilant, more truthful, more careful and precise in your speech," he remarked.

Taking up next their request to break his fast, he asked them two straight questions. Could they in all sincerity assure him that there would never be any more recrudescence of communal madness in Calcutta? Could they say that there was a genuine change of heart among the citizens of Calcutta so that they would no longer foster or tolerate communal frenzy? They should let him continue his fast if they could not give him that guarantee for, in the event of the present communal outbreak being followed by another, he would have to undertake an irrevocable fast unto death. "But supposing there is another communal outbreak in spite of your assurances, since you are not omniscient," he resumed, "would you give your word of honour that you would in that event suffer to the uttermost before a hair of the minority community is injured, that you would die in the attempt to put out the conflagration but not return alive to report failure? And I want this from you in writing." If they could give that guarantee, he would break his fast. "But mind you," he added, "my blood will be upon

your head if you say one thing and mean another ; rather than thoughtlessly hurry, let me prolong my fast a little longer. It would not hurt me. When a man fasts it is not the gallons of water he drinks that sustains him, but God."

He spoke with deep passion. A pin-drop silence followed. Shaheed Saheb broke the ice. Gandhiji had said that he would break the fast when Calcutta would return to sanity. That condition had been fulfilled. Was he not imposing fresh conditions by asking them to sign that declaration ? To this "legal argument" Gandhiji replied that there was no fresh condition imposed. All that was there implied in the original terms of the fast. "What I have spoken now is only a home truth to make you know what is what. If there is complete accord between your conviction and feeling, there should be no difficulty in signing that declaration. It is the acid test of your sincerity and courage of conviction. If, however, you sign it merely to keep me alive, you will be encompassing my death."

Everybody realized the solemnity of the warning. Rajaji and Acharya Kripalani, who had arrived during the latter part of the discussion, proposed that they might leave Gandhiji alone a little while and retire to the adjoining room to confer together. Shaheed Saheb endorsed the suggestion. They were about to retire when an appeal signed by about 40 representatives of the Hindus and Mussalmans, residents of Narkel Danga, Sitlatala, Manicktola, and Kankirgathi areas was brought in. In that appeal, the signatories swore that they would not allow any untoward event or incident in that locality which was the worst affected during the previous riots, and earnestly prayed to Gandhiji to break his fast. "It may also be reported," continued the signatories, "that no incident occurred in this mixed area since 14th of August 1947." "So our effort has not been in vain," remarked Shaheed Saheb, as he read out the appeal. "Yes, the leaven is at work," Gandhiji added.

Shaheed Saheb resumed, "Now that even the Muslims have joined in the appeal, won't you break your fast ? This shows that they have fully accepted your peace mission although they are the aggrieved party in the present riots. It is all the more strange because at one time they looked upon you as their arch enemy. But their hearts have been so touched by the services

you have rendered them that today they acclaim you as their friend and helper."

It was a graceful thing, gracefully uttered. Rajaji, not to be beaten in a tournament of chivalry, quickly added, "If I may vary the language, I would say that he is safer today in the hands of the Muslims than in those of the Hindus."

Gandhiji followed with interest this contest of chivalry and picked out for his comments only the portion of Shaheed Saheb's remarks in which he had referred to the Muslims as the aggrieved party. He did not like the "aggrieved party" language. "Do not think of Muslims as the aggrieved party," he remarked. "The essence of our present peace mission is that we are to forget the past. I do not want the Muslims to feel that in West Bengal they are the underdog. Unless we can forget the distinction, we will not have done solid work."

They then all retired to the next room and Gandhiji who had an attack of weakness and nausea during the latter part of the talk was left alone to rest.

In the deliberations that took place in the adjoining room Shaheeb Saheb was cautious and circumspect, which only showed his sincerity and sense of responsibility. Acharya Kripalani was cynical and full of sardonic humour as ever; Rajaji, tactful and persuasive and full of practical wisdom, concealing his emotion under a mask of ratiocination. The discussion was brief but unhurried. Rajaji dictated the draft of the pledge which was signed by Shri N. C. Chatterjee first, then by Shri Deven Mukerjee followed by Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy, Shri R. K. Jaidka, and Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib to be followed later by others. A car load of hand grenades and arms had in the meantime arrived to be surrendered to Gandhiji as a token of repentance on the part of those who had taken part in the savagery of reprisals and counter-reprisals. Without any loss of time the signatories then returned to Gandhiji with the document.

"But, sir, is it any good my signing this document?" remarked Shaheed Saheb to Gandhiji, "I may any time be called to Pakistan and then what happens to my pledge?"

"You must in that event have confidence that those whom you leave behind will deliver the goods," replied Gandhiji. "Moreover, you can come back."

"I have no desire to hoodwink you and I never will do so deliberately," remarked Shaheed Saheb in reply, explaining his extreme cautiousness, which Gandhiji greatly appreciated.

"Well, I will break this fast now," said Gandhiji at last, "and leave for the Punjab tomorrow. I shall now go there with far greater strength and confidence than I could have three days back."

Shaheed Saheb interposed, "You cannot leave tomorrow. Your presence is necessary here at least for a couple of days yet to consolidate the peace." Others supported him. They did not tell him what was uppermost in their minds besides, that they were deeply concerned at his undertaking a railway journey in his present state of health. The unruly crowds in Bihar and all along the line would tear him to pieces in their blind adoration.

So, Saturday was provisionally fixed for his departure.

Dr. Dinshah Mehta had in the meantime hurried away to get orange juice ready. Before breaking the fast Gandhiji, according to his usual practice, had prayer recited. The singing of the Poet's song:

"When life is dry and parched up,

Descend Thou in a shower of mercy"....followed by *Ramadhun* filled the air.

Calcutta and Dacca,
5th and 6th September, 1947
Harijan, 14-9-1947

THE FAST

Gandhiji began his fast for allaying the communal frenzy and restoration of sanity in Calcutta at 8-15 p.m. on the 1st of September, 1947, and broke it at 9-15 p.m. on the 4th instant with a glass of sweet lime juice which Mr. Suhrawardy served to him.

It is necessary to go back into the history of the fast, in order to prepare the background of the story as to how and under what conditions it was finally broken.

From the 14th of August till the 31st peace reigned. That evening there was a demonstration against Gandhiji's peace mission. On the following morning communal frenzy, in a very intense form, once more swept over several parts of the city. There were already indications in the morning that Gandhiji might fast; but the final decision was taken at eleven in the evening when, according to him, friends had failed to show any satisfactory reason why he should not take the contemplated step. The last sweet drink was taken at 7 p.m. He made the provisional decision at 8-15 p.m.

Any way, the fast was taken and perhaps partly on account of it and partly also because the common citizen, who had tasted peace after one year's life in the trenches, did not want the recrudescence, the riots rapidly cooled down, so that on the 4th the Government as well as the public could come and report to Gandhiji that not one incident had taken place during the last twentyfour hours. Parties after parties came to Gandhiji either with reports or with promises, and in spite of his weak state, he insisted on speaking in his feeble voice to every batch of interviewers. Dr. Sunil Bose, the celebrated physician and brother of Netaji, came to Gandhiji with a request that he must take plenty of rest and not talk at all. But Gandhiji told him he could not exclude relevant talk. Such necessary loss of energy was inevitable. He was certainly desirous of living, but not at the cost of work that duty demanded. "I can't interrupt the work," he said to Dr. Bose, "which has made me fast and which

makes me live. If my life ebbs away in the process, I would feel happy."

This was at half past eleven in the morning. A few minutes afterwards a batch of twentyseven friends belonging to Central Calcutta came to see him. During the communal disturbance of the last year, resistance groups had grown up here and there, and the present party represented such a group in Central Calcutta which had become the focus of the recrudescence on Monday. They had come to Gandhiji with the promise that henceforth there would be no more incidents in their part of the city and he should, therefore, break his fast now, otherwise all of them were prepared to go on a sympathetic fast with him. Gandhiji argued long with them, and what he said in substance was this. The present occasion was not one in which there was scope for a sympathetic fast. Hindus and Mussalmans had fought for one whole year, at the end of which the major parties had agreed that India should be divided into two States. Both had Hindu and Muslim subjects. It was now time for every one to create the sense of common citizenship, to rebuild the land so that men might taste the fruits of freedom. To this end all should work. Gandhiji said that if the friends had come to him only for the sake of saving his life, it was nothing.

Referring to the Poona Fast which ended with the desired amendment of the Communal Award, it was suggested by some that though the amendment was not to their desire, they accepted it for the sake of saving his life. This was a wholly wrong approach. Such fasts were intended to stir the conscience and remove mental sluggishness. Truth could not be sacrificed even for the sake of saving a life, however precious it was. Gandhiji, therefore, warned the present company that they should create real Hindu-Muslim unity by educating the people in a sense of common citizenship of the State, where every single man enjoyed perfect equality of rights which flowed from duty performed. If they worked with this aim in view, and succeeded after a few days' effort in making the Muslims in Calcutta feel safe where they now did not, it would be time for him to break the fast. Gandhiji was clearly of opinion that although his work was now confined to Calcutta, yet his one aim with respect to the Hindu-Muslim question was that the solution would be complete only when the minority, whether in the In-

dian Union or in Pakistan, felt perfectly safe even if they were in the minority of one. There would be no favoured and no depressed community anywhere. All should forget their religious affiliations. He was working to this end. He was working in such a manner that the majority community in each State should go forward and create the necessary conditions of freedom.

Some one asked him: Was it possible that his fast would have any effect on the anti-social elements in society? Today, i.e., during the present recrudescence, it was this element which had gained the upper hand. Could their hearts be converted by Gandhiji's crucifixion? Gandhiji's answer was very clear and emphatic. He said that *goondas* were there because we had made them so. During one year of past anarchy, it was understandable how these elements in society had gained respectability. But the war between Pakistanis and those for Undivided India had ended. It was time for peace-loving citizens to assert themselves and isolate *goondaism*. Non-violent non-co-operation was a universal remedy. Good was self-existent, evil was not. It was like a parasite living on and round good. It would die of itself when the support that good gave was withdrawn. The heart of the anti-social elements may or may not be changed; it would be enough if they were made to feel that the better elements of society were asserting themselves in the interests of peace and in the interests of normality.

To the interviewers from Central Calcutta Gandhiji's advice, therefore, was that they should desist from a sympathetic fast, go forth among the oppressed in each quarter, assure them that they were safe, and rebuild life so that safety would be a permanent feature of the new State of India. He would personally have loved to move about from quarter to quarter in Calcutta in order to place his views before the various bodies, but his physical condition would not permit it. If others worked, how could he rest? Yet he was bound to make his contribution. He felt that it should be in the shape of a fast.

The friends from Central Calcutta were followed by others. There came a deputation from the Bar Association of Calcutta with the promise that its members would do all that lay within their power to restore peace. Friends from Belliaghata, who had

a few weeks back looked upon Gandhiji's peace mission with suspicion, had been electrified by the fast. They had appreciated now the full significance of the mission and had, with all their energy, set about the task of rehabilitating the deserted Muslim *bustees.* Pressmen who had met the evacuees who had returned home testified to the sincerity and solicitude with which those who had driven them away a few weeks back, now treated them. All this was good news for Gandhiji, but yet he did not reach the point when the fast could be broken.

Towards evening, Sjt. N. C. Chatterjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Debendra Nath Mookerjee, its Secretary, Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib, Editor of the *Desh Darpan*, Dr. G. Jilani of the Muslim League, Dr. Abdur Rashid Chowdhury and Mohibur Rahaman of the Pakistan Seamens' Union came accompanied by some other friends to report on the quiet and with their request to Gandhiji to break his fast. Rajaji, the Governor of West Bengal, Acharya Kripalani, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy were also there. They had a long discussion with Gandhiji which left him rather worn out. Gandhiji heard what they said and did most of the talking. This is what he had to say.

He said that ever since the 14th of August although he had relished the fraternization between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, yet he looked on the ebullition of emotion with caution and reserve. If the feeling was due entirely to friendship new found, to the sense of brotherhood through common citizenship newly attained, there would be more signs of it e.g., in intensified efforts for rehabilitation. That sign was lacking. The recrudescence had then come. Therefore, Gandhiji felt he must fast. God had at least given him the capacity to work and die for communal peace. If there were anti-social elements in society, where a rowdy or a *goonda* plundered or killed a man whether Hindu or Muslim, his fast might not affect him. He knew his limitations. He fasted for the restoration of communal harmony. The sanity that had been in evidence for the last twentyfour hours was not enough for him. If the present company was going to assure him that it was a sincere affair and was going to be permanent, he would expect them to give him something in writing. It must state that supposing Hindu-Muslim riots broke out once more in Calcutta, they should assure him

that they would give their lives in the attempt to quell the riots. If they agreed, that would be enough. They must so work from tomorrow that real peace and common citizenship was created as a feature of Calcutta life, no matter what happened elsewhere. Communal peace should be their prime occupation. Their other occupations or avocations must henceforth occupy a second place.

There was another matter, but that was a condition which automatically attached itself to the situation. As in Bihar, as in Noakhali, so also in Calcutta, he wanted to tell the friends who were making themselves responsible for the break of his fast, that if communal frenzy broke out in Calcutta again, he might have to go on an *irrevocable* fast. The present fast was meant to activize the better, peace-loving and wise elements in society, to rescue them from mental sluggishness and make goodness active.

Realizing their responsibility, the friends retired to another room. Free and frank discussions took place between them. Suspicions were freely expressed, fears that the signatories might not rise to the heights demanded of them were discussed in an atmosphere of frankness, and finally came the decision to sign the document with all its implications.

Gandhiji felt glad. He took the signatories at their word, prayed that God might give them the courage and strength to implement their promise in daily life from the following morning; and with that prayer on his lips, he broke his fast last night. A heavy responsibility now lies upon the people of Bengal who have to implement the promise made sacred in Gandhiji's presence. May we have the requisite wisdom, strength and perseverence to see it through.

Calcutta, 5-9-'47
Harijan, 14-9-1947

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IMPLICATIONS OF FASTING

A friend writes :

> "It seems to me that to put your life in jeopardy has become the final and natural remedy for you. Be that as it may, I cannot help thinking that the remedy is akin to keeping a patient alive by administering injections or oxygen to him."

The above reflection proceeds from pain due to affection. Nevertheless, I must say that the writer has not given much thought to his criticism. Many other well-wishers probably entertain the same hasty opinion. Hence this public discussion.

The critic's simile is inapplicable. Administration of injections or oxygen are outward remedies, calculated merely to prolong bodily existence. Therefore, they are properly described as of momentary value. Nothing will be lost if those remedies were not applied. A physical body cannot be made immortal. All that medical skill can do is to prolong the existence for a while. This temporary prolongation confers no lasting benefit.

On the other hand, fasting is never intended to affect another's body. It must affect his heart. Hence it is related to the soul. And in this sense the effect, such as it is, cannot be described as temporary. It is of a permanent character. Whether the fasting person is spiritually fit for the task and whether he has properly applied the remedy is a different matter, irrelevant to the present purpose.

Of all the fasts of which I have recollection, of one only it can be said that though there was no fault in the conception, it was alloyed with external remedy with contra indication. Had this mistake not been made, I have no doubt that its natural, beneficial result would have flown from it as in the others. I refer to the fast I had undertaken in Rajkot against the late Thakore Saheb. I saw my mistake, retraced my step and averted a dangerous crisis. The last was in Calcutta in the current month of September. Admittedly, the result was as it should have been. Having reference to the spirit, I regard it as

permanent. Time alone would show whether the effect was of a lasting character or not. It must depend upon the purity of the fasting person and the accuracy of his perception. That enquiry would be irrelevant here. Moreover, the fasting man is not competent to undertake the enquiry. It can only be done by a properly equipped impartial person and that too after my death.

New Delhi, 25-9-'47

(Adapted from the original in Gujarati)

Harijan, 5-10-1947

188

WHY FAST ?

Q. Why does Gandhiji resort to a fast when he faces extreme difficulties ? What is the effect of this action on the life of the public of India ?

A. Such a question has been put to me before but never, perhaps, precisely in the same terms. The answer, however, is easy. It is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of *ahimsa*. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act and, therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened. But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can but promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and, therefore, prevents haste.

New Delhi, 10-12-'47

Harijan, 21-12-1947

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ANGER IS SHORT MADNESS

While deploring the sad happenings in the N.W.F.P., however, Gandhiji impressed on the audience in his post-prayer address that anger was not going to lead them anywhere. Anger bred revenge and the spirit of revenge was today responsible for all the horrible happenings there and elsewhere. What good will it do the Muslims to avenge the happenings in Delhi or for the Sikhs and the Hindus to avenge cruelties on their co-religionists in the Frontier and West Punjab ? If a man or a group of men went mad, should everyone follow suit ? Gandhiji warned the Hindus and the Sikhs that by killing and loot and arson they were destroying their own religions. He claimed to be a student of religion and he knew that no religion taught madness. Islam was no exception. He implored them all to stop their insane actions at once. Let not future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom because you could not digest it. Remember that unless you stop this madness the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world.

Harijan, 21-9-1947

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CURB ANGER

Turning to the burning question of the day Gandhiji said in his post-prayer address that he was prepared to understand their resentment and the consequent impatience. But if they deserved their independence, they would learn to subdue their resentment and trust their Government to do the best. He was presenting to them not his own way of non-violence, much as he would like to. He knew that he was out of court today. He suggested to them the adoption of the path that all democratic nations had adopted. In democracy the individual will was governed and limited by the social will which was the State, which was governed by and for democracy. If every individual took the law into his own hands there was no State, it became anarchy, i.e., absence of social law or State. That way lay destruction of liberty. Therefore, they should subdue their anger and let the State secure justice. In his opinion, if they permitted the State to do its duty, he had no doubt that every Hindu and every Sikh refugee would return to his home with honour and dignity. He was free to admit that they had suffered much in Pakistan, many homes had become desolate, lives had been lost, girls had been abducted, there had been forcible conversions. If they had self-control and did not allow their anger to get the better of their reason, girls would be returned, forcible conversions would be null and void and their properties returned to them. But this could not be done if they interfered with the even course of justice and thus spoiled their own case. They could not expect these things if they expected that their Muslim brothers and sisters should be driven out of India. He regarded any such thing as a monstrous proposition. They could not have the cake and eat it too. Moreover whilst it was true that the minorities, i.e., the Hindus and the Sikhs were badly treated in Pakistan, it was equally true that the East Punjab has also treated its minority, the Muslims, likewise. Guilt could not be weighed in golden scales. He had no data to measure the guilt on either side. It was surely sufficient to know that both the sides were guilty. The universal way to have proper adjustment was for both the States to make a frank and full confession

of guilt on either side and come to terms, failing agreement to resort to arbitration in the usual manner. The other and crude way was that of war. The thought repelled him. But there was no escape from it if there was neither agreement nor arbitration. Meanwhile, he hoped that wiser counsels would prevail and the Muslims who had not of their own free will chosen to migrate to Pakistan, should be asked by the neighbours to return to their homes with a perfect feeling of safety. This could not come about with the aid of the military. It could be done by return to sanity by the people concerned. He had made his final choice. He had no desire to live to see the ruin of India through fratricide. His incessant prayer was that God would remove him before any such calamity descended upon their fair land. And he asked the audience to join in the prayer.

Harijan, 28-9-1947

191

DO NOT TOLERATE INJUSTICE

Gandhiji said in his post-prayer speech that he had been an opponent of all warfare. But if there was no other way of securing justice from Pakistan, if Pakistan persistently refused to see its proved error and continued to minimize it, the Indian Union Government would have to go to war against it. War was not a joke. No one wanted war. That way lay destruction. But he could never advise anyone to put up with injustice. If all the Hindus were annihilated for a just cause, he would not mind it. If there was a war, the Hindus in Pakistan could not be fifth columnists there. No one would tolerate that. If their loyalty lay not with Pakistan, they should leave it. Similarly, the Muslims whose loyalty was with Pakistan should not stay in the Indian Union. To secure justice for the Hindus and the Sikhs was the function of the Government. The people could make the Government do their will. As for Gandhiji himself, his way was different. He worshipped God, which was Truth and *Ahimsa*.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-9-'47
Harijan, 5-10-1947

192

FIRM FAITH WEAKENED?

Gandhiji said in his post-prayer speech that newspapers had displayed his remarks about war in such a way that there was an enquiry from Calcutta whether he had really begun to advocate war. He was wedded to non-violence for all time and could never advocate war. In a State run by him there would be no police and no military. But he was not running the Government of the Indian Union. He had merely pointed out the various possibilities. India and Pakistan should settle their differences by mutual consultations and failing that fall back upon arbitration. But if one party persisted in wrong doing and would accept neither of the two ways mentioned above, the only way left open was that of war. They should know the circumstances that prompted his remark. In almost all his prayer speeches in Delhi, he had to tell the people not to take the law into their own hands, but let their Government secure justice for them. He put before them the logical steps which excluded lynch law. The latter would make decent government impossible. That did not mean that his faith in non-violence had weakened in the least degree.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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WRONG INTERPRETATION

Gandhiji, in his post-prayer speech said: My reference to the possibility of a war between the two sister dominions seems, I am told, to have produced a scare in the West. I do not know what reports were sent outside by newspaper correspondents. Summaries are always a dangerous enterprise except when they truly reflect the speaker's opinion. An unwarranted summary of a pamphlet I had written about South Africa in 1896 nearly cost me my life. It was so hopelessly unwarranted that within twentyfour hours of my being lynched European opinion in South Africa was turned from anger into contrition that an innocent man was made to suffer for no fault that he had committed. The moral I wish to draw from the foregoing version is that no one should be held responsible for what he has not said or done.

I hold that not a single mention of war in my speeches can be interpreted to mean that there was any incitement to or approval of war between Pakistan and the Union unless mere mention of it is to be taboo. We have among us the superstition that the mere mention of a snake ensures its appearance in the house in which the mention is made even by a child. I hope no one in India entertains such superstition about war.

I claim that I rendered a service to both the sister States by examining the present situation and definitely stating when the cause of war could arise between the two states. This was done not to promote war but to avoid it as far as possible. I endeavoured, too, to show that if the insensate murders, loot and arson by people continued, they would force the hands of their Government. Was it wrong to draw public attention to the logical steps that inevitably followed one after another?

India knows, the world should, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being devoted to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war. When a man vowed to non-violence as the law governing human beings dares to refer to

war, he can only do it so as to strain every nerve to avoid it. Such is my fundamental position from which I hope never to swerve even to my dying day.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-9-'47
Harijan, 12-10-1947

194

MY PRAYER

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech said that there were about 50,000 Muslim refugees in the *Purana Quila* and some more on the Humayun's tomb grounds. The conditions of life were none too pleasant there. To justify their suffering by stating the sufferings of the Hindu and the Sikh refugees in Pakistan and even in the Indian Union was wrong. The Hindus and the Sikhs had suffered no doubt and suffered heavily. It was for the Government of the Indian Union to secure justice for them. Lahore was famous for its various educational institutions. They had been founded by private enterprise. The Punjabis were industrious. They knew how to earn money and how to spend it in charity. There were first-class hospitals raised by the Hindus and the Sikhs in Lahore. All those institutions and private property had to be restored to the rightful owners. It could not be done by seeking private revenge. It was the duty of the Union Government to see that Pakistan Government did its duty as it was that of Pakistan to ensure justice by the Union. They could not secure justice by copying the evil ways of one another. If two men go out riding and one falls down, was the other to follow suit? That would merely result in breaking the bones of both. Supposing the Muslims would not be loyal to the Union, nor would they surrender arms, were they to continue murder of innocent men, women and children on that account? It was for the Government to see that the traitors were dealt with properly. By taking to savagery the people in both the States had tarnished the fair name that India had earned in the world. They were thereby bargaining for slavery and destruction of their great religions. They were free to do so. But he who had staked his life to gain the

independence of India did not wish to be a living witness to its destruction. With every breath he prayed to God either to give him the strength to quench the flames or remove him from this earth.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-10-'47
Harijan, 12-10-1947

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MESSAGE OF THE SIKH GURUS

Gandhiji began his discourse this evening by referring to a conversation he had during the course of the day with Baba Sardar Kharak Singh's Secretary, Sardar Santokh Singh. This friend told him that Guru Govind Singh had said exactly the same as he had quoted from Guru Arjun Dev. Most people imagined, quite wrongly — and on this score many Sikhs also were very ignorant — that Guru Govind Singh had taught his followers to kill the Mussalmans. The 10th *Guru*, whose *bhajan* Gandhiji read out, had said that it mattered little how, where, or by what name man worshipped God. He was the same, for everyone and, what is more, man was the same, i.e., he was of the same genus. Guru Govind Singh said that humanity could not be differentiated. Individuals differed in temperament or appearance but all were built in the same mould. They had the same feelings. They all die and are mingled with the dust. Air and sun were the same for all men. The Ganga would not refuse her refreshing waters to a Muslim. Clouds showered their rain on all alike. It was unregenerate man alone who differentiated between himself and his fellow. If, therefore, the message of the great Sikh *Gurus* and other religious leaders was true for them, they should realize that it was wholly wrong for anyone to say that the Indian Union should be purely a Hindu State composed of none but the Hindus.

The Right Use of the Kirpan

Gandhiji went on to say that by this he did not mean that the Sikhs were wedded to non-violence. They were not. But the Sardar told him that in Guru Govind Singh's day the Muslims

had gone away from their religion and, therefore, he ordered his followers to fight them. The *kirpan*, which the Sikhs carried, was a weapon for the defence of the innocent. It was meant to fight against tyranny, never to kill the innocent, or women and children, or old or disabled persons. Even during the war against the Muslims the code was to tend the wounded of both sides. But today the *kirpan* was often used for totally wrong purposes and he who used it wrongly was really not fit to carry it.

Birla House, New Delhi, 3-10-'47
Harijan, 12-10-1947

196

NO DEPRESSION

This is from one of the many messages of birthday congratulations :

> "May I suggest that the present situation should not depress you ? In my opinion this is the final attempt of the forces of evil to foil the divine plan of India's contribution to the solution of the world's distress by way of non-violence. You are today the only instrument in the world to further the divine purpose."

This is a telegram sent more out of personal affection than knowledge. Let us see.

It is perhaps wrong to describe my present state of mind as depression. I have but stated a fact. I am not vain enough to think that the divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far-seeing is wanted for the final purpose ? This is all speculation. No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy.

Without doubt the ideal thing would be neither to wish to live 125 years nor to wish to die now. Mine must be a state of complete resignation to the Divine Will. The ideal ceases to be that when it becomes real. All we can do is to make as near an

approach to it as possible. This I am doing with as much energy as I can summon to my assistance.

If I had the impertinence openly to declare my wish to live 125 years, I must have the humility under changed circumstances, openly to shed that wish. And I have done no more, no less. This has not been done in a spirit of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness. In that state I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from this "vale of tears" rather than make me a helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage, whether he dares to call himself a Muslim or Hindu or what not. Yet I cry — "Not my will but Thine alone shall prevail." If He wants me, He will keep me here on this earth yet awhile.

New Delhi, 5-10-'47
Harijan, 12-10-1947

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TWO AMERICAN FRIENDS' CONSOLATION

Of the many letters that come to me from American friends whom I do not know, the following extracts from two such friends are worth quoting :

"Your great distress due to the unhappy situation in your country demands that I intrude upon your contemplations of the painful events now taking place in India, to remind you that your beautiful words have taken root in all the corners of the earth.

"That you should feel a degree of disillusionment because of these sad happenings is natural. That that disillusionment should be measured and certainly not turn into discouragement is the purpose of my letter.

"Never does the seed turn directly into a beautiful fragrant flower without first going through certain phases of growth and development. And, if at some stage of its development — or growth — it falters, the presence of the gardener is more than ever required. In the complete absorption of the selfless task of nursing the ailing plant, the gardener perhaps cannot fully observe the growth of other plants in his garden, to join with him in his compassion for their stricken brother.

"I plead with you to give consideration to the countless numbers of people in all countries on earth, of all classes, races

and creeds, who are now also praying for peace. These people, whose hopes you have so well expressed and who took fresh courage from these victories which you did achieve with the Science of Peace, must now join me in prayer that the Master bless you and preserve you to continue your noble work, so much of which is still to be done."

What they say may prove true and that the senseless blood-bath through which India is still passing, though the original fury seems to have abated, may be nothing unusual as history goes. What India is passing through must be regarded as unusual. If we grant that such liberty as India has gained was a tribute to non-violence as I have repeatedly said, the non-violence of India's struggle was only in name, in reality it was passive resistance of the weak. The truth of the statement we see demonstrated by the happenings in India.

New Delhi, 6-11-'47
Harijan, 16-11-1947

198

"DO NOT LOSE HEART"

The following is from Madame Edmond Privat's letter, dated 27th August, 1947, to Gandhiji:

"Today I feel I must tell you how very deeply we have been moved by the late great events occurring to India, I mean her liberation and how we rejoiced over it.

"Yes, we know that you are not happy about it all — we read your article in the *Harijan*, but O Bapu ! do not lose heart, think, O *do* think of the significance it means for us in the Occident : That India did her revolution without shedding the blood of her opponent and was liberated, is an immense progress on the past ; it is a point reached in history without precedent on such a scale.

"O Bapu ! For us in the Occident, just emerging from a terrific bath of blood, cannot you see how bright luminous, divine appears to us the new dawn in India !

"Do be consoled, encouraged, braced up by our joy, our wonderful hope ; you whom we regard not only as our spiritual leader, but also an example of a man who has lived his faith fully in the daily life without losing his sense of proportion or humour. After all, is it not you who have taught us this precious message of your religion, to work with all our heart without expecting any result, leaving the rest in God's care ? Well, you

did what you did with all your faith and courage and now God shows us what can be achieved by non-violence as a wonderful hope, the only means for us to save our civilization from destruction. That the non-violence used was not always perfect was perhaps the case, but certainly the sincere efforts of your good people inspired by you, was there, I am convinced.

"Let us hope that we shall be worthy of this message and use it here to its full possibility.

"It is true, only a few people here understand its real meaning, but the soil is ready to receive it :

'Let us work heart within and God overhead!'

"Your article* in *Harijan* of 27th July, 1947, to which I was alluding at the beginning of this letter, is going to appear, translated by Edmond in the next *Essor*. (In fact the whole number is on India.)

"I am glad for the readers of *Essor* that they should see once more this point emphasized by you and their attention drawn energetically to it, i.e. the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violence.

"The more I think about it the more I am convinced that people do not grasp, cannot grasp this difference. They use passive resistance and, not succeeding, they get discouraged, though yet they may be perfectly sincere in their endeavours.

"Often the fact is that people *unconsciously* lie to themselves.

"That is why lately I have been trying to get a little knowledge about psycho-analysis. Formerly one used to explain to people that one had to be aware of the great guile of Satan in his working in our heart.

"Nowadays people want more scientific methods to reach at truth and, apart from therapeutic means to cure neurosis, psycho-analysis can help normal people to get clear with the mechanisms of their feelings and attain thus fuller consciousness which enables them, if they are sincere, to use really non-violence."

To this letter Gandhiji replied :

"I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time, I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels, and the meaning became clearer to me when

* This appears as chapter 170 above.

I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history — modern or ancient.

"Coming to my personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made or better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

"I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India -- not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

"I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for, we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915."

New Delhi, 29-11-'47
Harijan, 7-12-1947

199

IS IT DESERVED ?

In the course of a long letter which Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes had written to me before leaving the hospitable shore of India, he writes :

> "Of course you have been sad, well nigh overborne, by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your life work. Human nature cannot bear too much — it cracks under too great a strain — and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden. But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound as ever. Single handed you saved the situation, and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat. I count these last few months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career. You were never so great as in these dark hours."

I wonder if the claim can be proved. That much more than Dr. Holmes observed can be proved of *ahimsa*, I have not the slightest doubt. My difficulty is fundamental. Have I attained the requisite qualification for exhibiting the virtues of *ahimsa*, even as Dr. Holmes has said ? Knowing as I do the working of *ahimsa*, however imperfectly, I see every reason for the utmost caution in advancing claims that cannot be proved beyond doubt.

New Delhi, 3-1-'48
Harijan, 11-1-1948

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AHIMSA NEVER FAILS

The following correspondence between a European friend and Gandhiji is published for general information:

The European friend writes:

> "After carefully studying Roy Walker's thrilling story of your admirable work (*Sword of Gold*) I was satisfied that, life-long as your struggle for non-violence had been, your unlimited devotion had met with success, at least as far as India's leaders and masses were concerned, and the fact that Britain retired from India in apparent goodwill and friendship, seemed to bear out the hope that appreciation of non-violence was no longer restricted to your own country. The first breach into the thick walls of violence seemed made, and the prospects for humanity seemed to have grown more lucid than ever.
>
> "All the more depressing were your recent confessions, as reported in the last edition of *Peace News* by George Ll. Davis. It grieves me to the heart to read that you had never experienced the dark despair that was today within you. And though it is certainly true that God does not demand success but truth and love from a man, it is a sad sight to behold mankind as deeply entangled by violence as not to yield to the vast extent of soul-force and self-sacrifice given by you and your few friends during a long life.
>
> "However, willingly admitting as I do that you are in a far better position to look into the heart of things than I am, I cannot believe that your heroic efforts should be lost upon mankind, that the good seed you have so untiringly sown in all your surroundings, by your words as well as by your example, should be wasted.
>
> "Be that as it may, I for one (and I am sure I speak the heart of untold millions) feel it my bounden duty to express my deepest gratitude to you for giving the whole of your life to what you felt to be the one way to salvation for mankind."

Gandhiji's reply runs thus:

"I have not seen the report you refer to. In any case, whatever I have said does not refer in any way to the failure of *ahimsa*, but it refers to my failure to recognize, until it was too late, that what I had mistaken for *ahimsa* was not *ahimsa*,

but passive resistance of the weak, which can never be called *ahimsa* even in the remotest sense. The internecine feud that is going on today in India is the direct outcome of the energy that was set free during the thirty years' action of the weak. Hence, the proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as yet. Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted. I must not, therefore, flatter myself with the belief — nor allow friends like you to entertain the belief — that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself. All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stop. This confession should strengthen your belief in non-violence and spur you and friends like you to action along the path."

New Delhi, 1-1-'48
Harijan, 11-1-1948

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WHERE AHIMSA, WHERE KHADI ?

A correspondent from Kathiawad writes :

> "Like as in many districts or provinces so in Kathiawad people are fast withdrawing their faith in *khadi* and *ahimsa*. Many Congressmen and Gandhites seem to argue how non-violence can work in matters political."

The writer of the letter enters into a number of arguments giving illustrations. I have, however satisfied myself with giving the dominant sentences in the letter. In them are embedded three errors :

I have been explaining of late that neither in Kathiawad nor in other parts of India had people real faith in non-violence or *khadi*. It is true that I deceived myself into the belief that people were being wedded to non-violence with *khadi* as its symbol. As a matter of fact in the name of non-violence people observed the outward peace of the impotent. They had never even attempted to drive violence from their hearts. He who runs can see for himself the verification of this fact. It had become patent to everyone, when I went to Rajkot in connec-

tion with the Rajkot imbroglio, that there was no *Rama* in Rajkot and, therefore, Kathiawad. Hence, it is hardly apt to say that their faith is on the wane now-a-days.

It is equally improper to question now the efficacy of non-violence in matters political. What was the people's fight against the foreign power, if it was not a political matter ? Indeed, the disgraceful fight between brother and brother that we are witnessing today is much less political. Today, irreligion is stalking the country in the name of religion. Even the outward peace that we were able to observe in the fight against the foreign power is conspicuous by its absence today.

The third error consists in the distinction the correspondent makes between Congressites and Gandhites. It has no foundation in fact. If there is one Gandhite, it must be me. I hope, however, that I am humble enough not to arrogate any such claim. Gandhite means a worshipper of Gandhi. There must be a God to worship. But I have never arrogated to myself any such claim. Hence, there can be no devotee of mine. Moreover, how can it be said that those who call themselves Gandhites are not also Congressites ? There are innumerable servants of the Congress although they are not four anna members with their names registered in a Congress register. The reader should know that I myself belong to that category. Hence, it is contended that the distinction made by my correspondent is meaningless.

I have repeatedly said that I have neither part nor say in many things that are going on in the country today. It is no secret that the Congress willingly said goodbye to non-violence when it accepted power. Again, I firmly believe that the method of rationing of food and clothing is highly injurious for the country. If I had my way, I would not buy a grain of foodstuff from outside India. It is my firm belief that even today there is enough foodstuff in the country. Only the villagers have felt compelled to conceal the cereals and pulses under the insufferable control. Again, if people follow me, there would be no deadly quarrel between the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. The plain matter of fact is that I am not the current coin that, I had fancied, I once was. Mine is a voice in the wilderness.

As for *khadi*, it has a kind of a place if we tear it from its root which is *ahimsa*. It no longer occupies the proud place of being the symbol par excellence of *ahimsa*. Those who being in the political field support *khadi* do so because it has attained that vogue. Today three cheers belong not to *khadi* but to mill cloth, for we labour under the delusion that but for the manufactures from our mills, millions would have to go naked. Can there be a greater hallucination than this ? We grow enough cotton in the country. We have any number of handlooms and spinning wheels. India is not unused to the art of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, but somehow or other the fear has seized us that the millions will not take to hand-spinning and weaving hand-spun yarn for their own needs. A haunted man will detect fear even when there is no cause for it. And do we not know that many more die of fright than of the actual disease, the very name of which has given them the fright ?

New Delhi, 25-10-'47

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

Harijan, 2-11-1947

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WORKING OF AHIMSA

This evening when as usual before the prayer meeting the audience was asked if there was any objector to the *Quran* verses being recited as part of the prayer, one member spoke up and persisted in his objection. Gandhiji had made it clear that if there was such objection, he would neither have public prayer nor the after-prayer speech on current events. Consequently, he sent word that there would be neither prayer nor speech before the public. But the gathering would not disperse without seeing Gandhiji. He, therefore, went to the rostrum and said a few words on the reason for abstention and the working of *ahimsa* as he understood it. He said that it was unseemly for anyone to object to the prayer, especially, when it was on a private lawn. Nevertheless, his *ahimsa* warned him against disregarding even one objector when an overwhelming majority were likely to overawe one person into silence. It would be otherwise

if the whole audience objected. It would then be his duty to have the prayer even at the risk of being molested. There was also the further consideration that the majority should not be disappointed for the sake of one objector. The remedy was simple. If the majority restrained themselves and entertained no anger against, or evil design on, the solitary objector, it would be his duty to hold the prayer. The possibility, however, was that if the whole audience was non-violent in intention and action, the objector would restrain himself. Such he held was the working of non-violence. He further held that truth and non-violence were not the monopoly of a few adepts. All universal rules of conduct known as God's commandments were simple and easy to understand and carry out if the will was there. They only appeared to be difficult because of the inertia which governed mankind. Man was a progressive being. There was nothing at a standstill in nature. Only God was motionless for, He was, is and will be the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, and yet was ever moving. We need not, however, worry ourselves over the attributes of God. We had to realize that we were ever progressing. Hence, he held that if mankind was to live, it had to come growingly under the sway of truth and non-violence. It was in view of these two fundamental rules of conduct that he and the audience had to work and live.

Birla House, New Delhi, 30-10-'47
Harijan, 9-11-1947

FIRM ON NON-VIOLENCE

A correspondent rebuked Gandhiji for having dared to advise Mr. Winston Churchill, Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese, when they were about to lose their all, that they should adopt his technique of non-violence. The writer of the letter then went on to say that if he could give that advice when it was safe for him to do so, why did he abandon his non-violence when his own friends in the Congress Government had forsaken it and even sent armed assistance to Kashmir ? The letter concluded by inviting Gandhiji to point out definitely how the raiders were to be opposed non-violently by the Kashmiris.

Replying Gandhiji said that he was sorry for the ignorance betrayed by the writer. The audience would remember that he had repeatedly said that he had no influence in the matter over his friends in the Union Cabinet. He held on to his views on non-violence as firmly as ever, but he could not impose his views on his best friends, as they were, in the Cabinet. He could not expect them to act against their convictions and everybody should be satisfied with his confession that he had lost his original hold upon his friends. The question put by the writer was quite apposite. Gandhiji's answer was simple. His *ahimsa* forbade him from denying credit, where it was due, even though the creditor was a believer in violence. Thus, though he did not accept Subhas Bose's belief in violence and his consequent action, he had not refrained from giving unstinted praise to him for his patriotism, resourcefulness and bravery. Similarly, though he did not approve of the use of arms by the Union Government for aiding the Kashmiris and though he could not approve of Sheikh Abdulla's resort to arms, he could not possibly withhold admiration for either for their resourceful and praiseworthy conduct, especially, if both the relieving troops and the Kashmiri defenders died heroically to a man. He knew that if they could do so, they would perhaps change the face of India. But if the defence was purely non-violent in intention and action, he would not use the word 'perhaps', for, he would be sure of change in

the face of India even to the extent of converting to the defender's view the Union Cabinet, if not even the Pakistan Cabinet.

The non-violent technique, he would suggest, would be no armed assistance to the defenders. Non-violent assistance could be sent from the Union without stint. But the defenders, whether they got such assistance or not, would defy the might of the raiders or even a disciplined army in overwhelming numbers. And defenders dying at their post of duty without malice and without anger in their hearts against the assailants, and without the use of any arms including even their fists would mean an exhibition of heroism as yet unknown to history. Kashmir would then become a holy land shedding its fragrance not only throughout India, but the world. Having described non-violent action he had to confess his own impotence, in that his word lacked the strength, which perfect mastery over self as described in the concluding lines of the second chapter of the *Gita*, gave. He lacked the *tapashcharya* requisite for the purpose. He could only pray and invite the audience to pray with him to God that if it pleased Him, He might arm him with the qualifications he had just described.

Birla House, New Delhi, 5-11-'47
Harijan, 16-11-1947

SHERWANI'S MARTYRDOM

Gandhiji quoted from a note given to him by an eyewitness of the story of exemplary bravery :

"Mir Maqbool Sherwani was a young brave leader of the National Conference in Baramula. He was in the early thirties.

"On learning that he was an important leader of the National Conference, the invaders tied him up to two posts in a place near the Nishat Talkies. They beat him first and then asked him to repudiate the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and its leader Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Abdulla. They asked him to swear allegiance to the so-called Azad Kashmir provisional government which had its headquarters in Palandari.

"Sherwani stoutly refused to repudiate his national organization and told the invaders to their face that the Sher-e-Kashmir was at the head of affairs now, that Indian Union troops had arrived and that the invaders would be driven out in a few days.

"This enraged and frightened the invader gangs who riddled him with fourteen bullets. They cut off his nose and disfigured his face and stuck a notice on his body with the words :

'This is a traitor.
His name is Sherwani.
This is the fate all traitors will get.'

"But within 48 hours of this cold-blooded murder and sadistic terror Sherwani's prophecy came true and the invaders ran pell-mell out of Baramula, with Indian Union troops hot in pursuit."

This was a martyrdom, said Gandhiji, of which anyone, be he a Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or any other, would be proud.

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The following is from Mr. Richard B. Gregg, whom many readers of the *Harijan* know as an American friend who used to live in Shantiniketan as also with me in Sabarmati years ago:

"Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India but also to offer hope for the future.

"It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression not so much of inter-communal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long pent-up resentments of the masses because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by foreign political rule but by foreign modern social, economic and financial ways which are contrary to the ancient habits of *dharma* which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By foreign ways I mean such things as the English land-holding system, usurious money lending, heavy taxes payable not in kind but in money, and other interferences with long established village life common to all Indian communities.

"Psychological studies have shown clearly that severe frustrations suffered during the childhood of an individual generate resentments which are suppressed and remain suppressed long after the person who caused the original frustration has died, but later some occasion pulls a trigger, as it were, and releases the pent-up energy of the old resentment which then pours forth in violence upon some perfectly innocent person. This explains many crimes of violence, and perhaps some of the cruelties against the Jews in Europe. In India the establishment or religious electorates created a channel into which it was easy for this energy to flow, but I believe the fearful energy of the explosion of wrath comes from the older cause I have mentioned. Such an idea as this would help explain why in all countries all through history a major change of political power results in more or less violence and disorder. The masses always suffer some oppression and, therefore, have resentments which flare up upon a shift of control or may be exploited by selfish leaders.

"If this surmise is true, it suggests that the suspicion and hatred of one community towards another is not so deep as now appears. It also means that as soon as the masses can be guided back into their ancient ways of life with the chief

emphasis on religion and small organizations — village *panchayats* and communal family systems — the energy of the people will be turned from violence into creative channels. I would expect that *khadi* work among the refugees might help start such a diversion of energy into sound channels. In such a development I see hope.

"Forgive me if this seems to be presumptuous. I write it only in the hope that an humble outsider, just because he is outside, may see a gleam of encouragement that is not so easy to see in the dust and distraction of the struggle. Anyhow, I love you and India."

Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry, I have not been able, for want of time to study the subject. Mr. Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr. Gregg gives an explanation which mystifies the mind instead of clearing it. "Hope for the future" I have never lost and never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that in all probability there is a vital defect in my technique of the working of non-violence. There was no real appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against British *Raj*. Therefore, the peace, the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when British *Raj* was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing. In it there is no room for failure of any hope. Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith in non-violence itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique.

New Delhi, 11-11-'47
Harijan, 23-11-1947

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RELIGION ADMITS OF NO COERCION

Gandhiji said in his post-prayer speech that freedom, without equality for all irrespective of race or religion, was not worth having for the Congress. In other words, the Congress and any government representative of the Congress must remain a purely democratic, popular body leaving every individual to follow that form of religion which best appealed to him without any interference from the State. There was so much in common between people living in the same State under the same flag owing undivided allegiance to it. There was so much in common between man and man that it was a marvel that there could be any quarrel on the ground of religion. Any creed or dogma which coerced others into following one uniform practice was a religion only in name, for a religion worth the name did not admit of any coercion. Anything that was done under coercion had only a short lease of life. It was bound to die. It must be a matter of pride to them whether they were four anna Congress members or not that they had in their midst an institution without a rival which disdained to become a theocratic State and which always believed and lived up to the belief that the State of their conception must be a secular, democratic State having perfect harmony between the different units composing the State. When he, the speaker, thought of the plight of the Muslims in the Union, how in many places ordinary life had become difficult for them and how there was a continuing exodus of the Muslims from the Union, he wondered whether the people who were responsible for creating such a state of things could ever become a credit to the Congress. He, therefore, hoped that during the year that had just commenced, the Hindus and the Sikhs would so behave as to enable every Muslim, whether a boy or a girl, to feel that he or she was as safe and free as the tallest Sikh or Hindu.

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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DEATH — COURAGEOUS OR COWARDLY

A Bengali friend writes a long letter in Bengali on the exodus from East Pakistan. Its purport is that though workers like him understand and appreciate my argument and distinction between death — courageous and cowardly — the common man detects in my statement a not too hidden advice in favour of migration. "If death is to be the lot in any case, courage becomes of no count; for man lives but to escape death," he says.

This argument seems to beg the question. Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to do so. He is advised to learn to love death as well as life, if not more so. A hard saying, harder to act up to, one may say. Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery. Life becomes livable only to the extent that death is treated as a friend, never as an enemy. To conquer life's temptations, summon death to your aid. In order to postpone death a coward surrenders honour, wife, daughter and all. A courageous man prefers death to the surrender of self-respect. When the time comes, as it conceivably can, I would not leave my advice to be inferred, but it will be given in precise language. That today my advice might be followed only by one or none does not detract from its value. A beginning is always made by a few, even one.

New Delhi, 23-11-'47
Harijan, 30-11-1947

NO LIMITATIONS

A correspondent says in substance:

> "Individual *ahimsa* I can understand. Corporate *ahimsa* between friends is also intelligible. But you talk of *ahimsa* towards avowed enemies. This is like a mirage. It will be a mercy if you give up this obstinacy of yours. If you do not, you will forfeit the esteem you enjoy. What is worse, you, being considered a *Mahatma*, mislead many credulous persons to their own and society's harm."

That non-violence which only an individual can use is not of much use in terms of society. Man is a social being. His accomplishments to be of use must be such as any person with sufficient diligence can attain. That which can be exercised only among friends is of value only as a spark of non-violence. It cannot merit the appellation of *ahimsa*. 'Enmity vanishes before *ahimsa*', is a great aphorism. It means that the greatest enmity requires an equal measure of *ahimsa* for its abatement. Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, even extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer experiences from day to day so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns. A poet has sung that the way to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted. The atmosphere today is so much saturated with poison that one refuses to recollect the wisdom of the ancients and to perceive the varied little experiences of *ahimsa* in action. 'A bad turn is neutralized by a good', is a wise saying of daily experience in practice. Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise *ahimsa*, sustains this planet of ours.

This much must be admitted. The precious grace of life has to be strenuously cultivated, naturally so because it is uplifting. Descent is easy not so ascent. A large majority of us being un-

disciplined, our daily experience is that of fighting or swearing at one another on the slightest pretext.

This, the richest grace of *ahimsa* will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline.

New Delhi, 8-12-'47
Harijan, 14-12-1947

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INDIA'S HERITAGE

Gandhiji in his post-prayer address said that the Prime Minister of Burma had been to see him. He was full of humility. Gandhiji told him that though India was a great country geographically and its culture was ancient, today there was nothing for Burma to learn from India although India had given birth to Guru Nanak who taught love and tolerance for all. The Sikhs were to be friends with the Hindus, the Muslims and everybody. It was wrong to make a difference between the Sikhs and the Hindus. Master Tara Singh had compared the Hindus and the Sikhs to the nail and the nailbed. No one, he said, could separate the two. Gandhiji was glad to hear it. Who was Guru Nanak, if not a Hindu? The *Guru Granth* was full of the teachings of the *Vedas*. Hinduism was like a mighty ocean which received and absorbed all religious truths. It was a tragedy that India and the Hindus seemed to have forgotten their heritage. They seemed to be engaged in fratricidal strife today. He did not want Burma to learn strife from India. They should forget the ugly present, which he hoped was temporary, and remember that India had won her freedom without bloodshed. He had admitted that it was not non-violence of the brave that India had practised. But, whatever it was, it had enabled a mighty nation of forty crores to shake off the foreign yoke without bloodshed. It was the freedom of India that had brought freedom to Burma and Ceylon. A nation that had won freedom without the force of arms should be able to keep it too without the force of arms. This he said in spite of the fact that India had an army, a navy in the making and an air force and these were being developed still further. He was convinced that unless India

developed her non-violent strength, she had gained nothing either for herself or for the world. Militarization of India would mean her own destruction as well as of the whole world. He reminded the Burmese friends that they had got their Buddhism too from India. He had come in touch with their monks. Let Burma take the best of Buddhism from India. In his opinion the quality of the original had suffered from migration. He wanted Burma and Ceylon to rise to their highest heights. This they could do only by copying its best from India and omitting its obvious shortcomings.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-12-'47
Harijan, 14-12-1947

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THE DOCTRINE OF MERGER

Merger, as used here, has no legal significance. People of some States in the Deccan Union are reported to have expressed an intense desire for the extinction of their princely houses and their absorption in their provinces. This has been described as merging in British India (as it was called during British rule), as distinguished from Princely India or States.

In a society based on non-violence, there should be no impatient destruction compassed by man of another, for, every evil-doer, unless he mends his ways, is bound to destroy himself. Evil can never be self-existent. Therefore, the Congress policy has always been to mend princely rule, not to end it, and to induce the princes to become trustees and servants in reality of their people. In pursuance of that policy the Congress Government has tried and in the main succeeded in inducing the States to accede to the Union instead of planning the destruction of princely rule and absorption of their States as an integral part of the Union provinces concerned. Therefore, merger can take place only under two conditions, viz. if the misrule of a particular prince is self-evident and is irremediable, the people will have the right, as it will be their duty, to seek absorption or merger in their province. The second condition would be when a prince and the people of his State both desire merger. It is suggested

that any one State or its people, whether powerful or insignificant, should not seek merger unless all the States or the majority desire it. I do not think so. Misrule cannot wait to be ended before there is equal misrule in other States. Nor can a prince, who does not wish for any princely power be expected or be made to wait till the other princes are ready. Each case will have to be decided on its merits by the Central Government.

New Delhi, 13-12-'47
Harijan, 21-12-1947

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AN ALL-IN FAST

One cannot forget the moral indignation with which, talking about the accession of an Indian State, Gandhiji told a Muslim leader that if it involved the sacrifice of any moral principle he would not care if,— leave alone that State — the whole of the Princely order acceded to Pakistan in preference to the Indian Union.

An India reduced in size but purged in spirit might still be the nursery of the non-violence of the brave and take up the moral leadership of the world, bringing a message of hope and deliverance to the oppressed and exploited races. But an unwieldy, soulless India would merely be an imitation, and a third rate imitation at that, of the Western military States, utterly powerless to stand up against their onslaught. He had no desire to outlive the India of his dreams.

"We are steadily losing hold on Delhi," he remarked to another friend, expressing his concern about the communal situation in Delhi. "If Delhi goes, India goes and with that the last hope of world peace." It was intolerable to him that a person like Dr. Zakir Hussain, for instance, or for that matter Shaheed Suhrawardy should not be able to move about in Delhi as freely and with as much safety as himself. When a deputation of the Muslims of Delhi waited upon him setting forth to him their grievances, he immediately arranged a meeting between them and important Cabinet mem-

bers in his presence, and later the police chief saw them and promised them the fullest redress. But his agony continued.

That did not mean that he was indifferent to the sufferings of the minority community in the other Dominion. On the contrary, their sufferings only accentuated his impatience. He would have liked to be able to go to their succour — in Sind, in the Western Punjab, in the N. W. F. P. But with what face, with what confidence could he go there when he could not guarantee full redress to the Delhi Muslims? He felt helpless and helplessness he has never put up with in all his life.

And so from the depths of his anguish came his decision to fast. Unlike some of his previous fasts, it is an all-in fast. As he has already stated it came to him in a flash. It left no room for argument, so much so that he gave no inkling of what was passing in his mind to Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru who saw him only a couple of hours before the announcement of the fast yesterday.

"I have a lot to say against your undertaking the present fast," wrote a correspondent in a note addressed to him on getting the news of his decision to fast, "but I have had no previous warning......My main concern and my argument against your fast is that you have at last surrendered to impatience, whereas the mission which you have undertaken is essentially one of infinite patience. You do not seem to have realized what a tremendous success you have achieved by your inexhaustible and patient labour. It has already saved lakhs upon lakhs of lives and could save many more still. But your patience seems to have suddenly snapped. By dying you will not be able to realize what you would have realized by conserving your life. I would, therefore, beseech you to pay heed to my entreaty and give up your fast."

To this Gandhiji replied: "I am not prepared to concede that my decision to undertake the fast was hasty. It was quick no doubt.... The statement was of the nature of heartsearching and prayer. Therefore, it cannot be dubbed as "hasty" in any sense of the term.....

"I did not need to hear any arguments as to the propriety of the fast. The fact that I did listen to arguments only bespeaks my patience and humility....

"Your worry as well as your argument are of no use. You are, of course, my friend and a high-minded friend at that. Your concern is natural and I esteem it, but your argument only betrays impatience and superficial thinking. I regard this step of mine as the last word on patience. Would you regard patience that kills its very object, as patience or folly?

"I cannot take credit for the results that have been achieved since my coming to Delhi. It would be self-delusion on my part to do so. Mere man cannot judge as to how many lives were really saved by my labours. Only the Omniscient and All-Seeing God can do that. Does it not betray sheer ignorance to attribute sudden loss of patience to one who has been as patience personified right from the beginning of September last?

"It was only when in terms of human effort, I had exhausted all resources and realized my utter helplessness that I put my head on God's lap. That is the inner meaning and significance of my fast. If you read and ponder in your mind the epic of *Gajendra Moksha*,* you might be able properly to appraise my step.

"The last sentence of your note is a charming token of your affection. But your affection is rooted in ignorance or infatuation. Ignorance does not cease to be ignorance because of its repetition among persons, no matter how numerous they are.

"So long as we hug life and death it is idle to claim that it must be preserved for a certain cause. 'Strive while you live' is a beautiful saying, but there is a hiatus in it. Striving has to be in a spirit of detachment.

"Now you will understand why I cannot accept your counsel. God sent me the fast. He alone will end it if and when He wills. In the meantime it behoves us all to believe that whether He preserves my life or ends it, it is equally to the good and we should act accordingly. Let our sole prayer be that God may vouchsafe me strength of spirit during the fast so that the temptation to live may not lead me into a hasty or premature termination of the fast."

On a previous occasion when the late Ali brothers had complained and asked him if it was not a breach of loyalty to

* The reference is to the story of an elephant, who when all support failed prayed to God and obtained help. —Ed.

his colleagues not to have consulted them before deciding to go on a twentyone days' fast, his reply was that it was not, for had not he and his colleagues pledged their loyalty to God? How could he be guilty of disloyalty to them while keeping his covenant with God? But both the Sardar and Pandit Nehru in the present case were far more understanding and full of sympathetic insight. Neither they, nor the Maulana Saheb and other friends and colleagues who saw him later, tried to strive with him but set about to tackle the problem constructively.

"Brave deeds and not vain laments—should be our motto," remarked Gandhiji to a sister who came to seek guidance. Equally characteristic was his reply to a Sikh friend, who saw him soon after the commencement of the fast yesterday. "My fast is against no one party, group or individual exclusively and yet it excludes nobody. It is addressed to the conscience of all, even the majority community in the other Dominion. If all or any one of the groups respond fully, I know the miracle will be achieved. For instance, if the Sikhs respond to my appeal as one man, I shall be wholly satisfied. I shall go and live in their midst in the Punjab for they are a brave people and I know they can set an example in non-violence of the brave which will serve as an object lesson to all the rest."

New Delhi, 14-1-'48
Harijan, 18-1-1948

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TO THE PEOPLE OF GUJARAT

To

The Men and Women of Gujarat,

I am dictating this from my bed early on Wednesday morning. It is the second day of the fast though twenty-four hours have not been completed since the fast commenced. It is the last day of posting for this week's *Harijan*. Hence, I have decided to address a few words in Gujarati to the peope of Gujarat.

I do not regard this fast as an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after deep thought and yet it has sprung not from reasoning but God's will that rules men's reason. It is addressed to no particular section or individual and yet it is addressed equally to all. There is no trace of anger of any kind behind it nor the slightest tinge of impatience. But behind it is the realization that there is a time for everything and an opportunity, once missed, never returns. Therefore, the only thing that now remains is for every Indian to think as to what his or her duty in the present hour is. Gujaratis are Indians. So, whatever I write in Gujarati is addressed equally to all the people of India.

Delhi is the Metropolis of India. If, therefore, we really in our hearts do not subscribe to the two-nation theory, in other words, if we do not regard the Hindus and the Muslims as constituting two distinct nations, we shall have to admit that the picture that Delhi presents today is not what we have envisaged always of the capital of India. Delhi is the Eternal City, as the ruins of its forerunners — Indraprastha and Hastinapur testify. It is the heart of India. Only a nit-wit can regard it as belonging to the Hindus or the Sikhs only. It may sound harsh but it is the literal truth. From Kanya Kumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam, all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this vast subcontinent and have adopted it as their dear motherland, have an

equal right to it. No one has a right to say that it belongs to the majority community only and that the minority community can only remain there as the underdog. Whoever serves it with the purest devotion must have the first claim. Therefore, anyone who wants to drive out of Delhi all Mussalmans as such must be set down as its enemy No. 1 and therefore, enemy No. 1 of India. We are rushing towards that catastrophe. It is the bounden duty of every son and daughter of India to take his or her full share in averting it.

What should we do then? If we would see our dream of *Panchayat Raj*, i. e. true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and outcaste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe *swadeshi* as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life. If he is a Sikh in terms of the commandment of the Gurus he would have the heroic courage to stand single-handed and alone—without yielding an inch of ground—against the "one lakh and a quarter" enjoined by them. Needless to say, such a son of India will not want to be told what his duty in the present hour is.

Yours etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

New Delhi,
Makar Sankranti, 14-1-'48
Harijan, 18-1-1948

(From the Gujarati)

MY FAST AS A PROTEST

One fasts for health's sake under laws governing health, fasts as a penance for a wrong done and felt as such. In these fasts, the fasting one need not believe in *ahimsa*. There is, however, a fast which a votary of non-violence sometimes feels impelled to undertake by way of protest against some wrong done by society, and this he does when he as a votary of *ahimsa* has no other remedy left. Such an occasion has come my way.

When on September 9th, I returned to Delhi from Calcutta, It was to proceed to the West Punjab. But that was not be. Gay Delhi looked a city of the dead. As I alighted from the train I observed gloom on every face I saw. Even the Sardar, whom humour and the joy that humour gives never desert, was no exception this time. The cause of it I did not know. He was on the platform to receive me. He lost no time in giving me the sad news of the disturbances that had taken place in the Metropolis of the Union. At once I saw that I had to be in Delhi and 'do or die'. There is apparent calm brought about by prompt military and police action. But there is storm within the breast. It may burst forth any day. This I count as no fulfilment of the vow to 'do' which alone can keep me from death, the incomparable friend. I yearn for heart friendship between the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. It subsisted between them the other day. Today it is non-existent. It is a state that no Indian patriot worthy of the name can contemplate with equanimity. Though the Voice within has been beckoning for a long time, I have been shutting my ears to It, lest it may be the voice of Satan otherwise called my weakness. I never like to feel resourceless, a Satyagrahi never should. Fasting is his last resort in the place of the sword — his or other's. I have no answer to return to the Musilm friends who see me from day to day as to what they shoud do. My impotence has been gnawing at me of late. It will go immediately the fast is undertaken. I have been brooding over it for the last three days. The final conclusion has flashed upon me and it makes me

happy. No man, if he is pure, has anything more precious to give than his life. I hope and pray that I have that purity in me to justify the step.

Worthy of Blessing

I ask you all to bless the effort and to pray for me and with me. The fast begins from the first meal tomorrow. The period is indefinite and I may drink water with or without salts and sour limes. It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all the communities brought about without any outside pressure, but from an awakened sense of duty. The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige and her fast fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and therethrough the world. I flatter myself with the belief that the loss of her soul by India will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm-tossed and hungry world. Let no friend, or foe if there be one, be angry with me. There are friends who do not believe in the method of the fast for the reclamation of the human mind. They will bear with me and extend to me the same liberty of action that they claim for themselves. With God as my supreme and sole counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other adviser. If I have made a mistake and discover it, I shall have no hesitation in proclaiming it from the housetop and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of my making such a discovery. If there is clear indication, as I claim there is, of the Inner Voice, it will not be gainsaid. I plead for all absence of argument and inevitable endorsement of the step. If the whole of India responds or at least Delhi does, the fast might be soon ended.

No Softness

But whether it ends soon or late or never, let there be no softness in dealing with what may be termed as a crisis. Critics have regarded some of my previous fasts as coercive and held that on merits the verdict would have gone against my stand but for the pressure exercised by the fasts. What value can an adverse verdict have when the purpose is demonstrably sound? A pure fast, like duty, is its own reward. I do not embark upon it for the sake of the result it may bring. I do so because I must. Hence, I urge everybody dispassionately to

examine the purpose and let me die, if I must, in peace which I hope is ensured. Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. That destruction is certain if Pakistan ensures no equality of status and security of life and property for all professing the various faiths of the world, and if India copies her. Only then Islam dies in the two Indias, not in the world. But Hinduism and Sikhism have no world outside India. Those who differ from me will be honoured by me for their resistance however implacable. Let my fast quicken conscience, not deaden it. Just contemplate the rot that has set in in beloved India and you will rejoice to think that there is an humble son of hers who is strong enough and possibly pure enough to take the happy step. If he is neither, he is a burden on earth. The sooner he disappears and clears the Indian atmosphere of the burden the better for him and all concerned.

I would beg of all friends not to rush to Birla House nor try to dissuade me or be anxious for me. I am in God's hands. Rather, they should turn the searchlights inwards, for this is essentially a testing time for all of us. Those who remain at their post of duty and perform it diligently and well, now more so than hitherto, will help me and the cause in every way. The fast is a process of self-purification.

Birla House, New Delhi, 12-1-'48
Harijan, 18-1-1948

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BLAME NOBODY FOR FAST

Gandhiji attended the prayers as usual this evening. A question was asked as to whom he considered blameworthy for the fast. He blamed no individual or community. He did believe, however, that if the Hindus and Sikhs insisted on turning out the Muslims from Delhi, they would be betraying India and their own faiths. And that hurt him.

Some people had taunted him that he had sympathy for the Muslims only and that he had undertaken the fast for their sake. They were right. But all his life he had stood, as everyone should stand, for minorities or those in need. Pakistan had resulted in depriving the Muslims of the Union of pride and self-confidence. It hurt him to think that this was so. It weakened a State which kept or allowed any class of people who had lost self-confidence. His fast was against the Muslims too in the sense that it should enable them to stand up to their Hindu and Sikh brethren. In terms of the fast Muslim friends had to work no less than the Hindus and the Sikhs. Thus they were in the habit of singling out Pandit Nehru and him for praise and by contrast blaming Sardar Patel. Some twitted the Sardar for his remark that Muslim Leaguers could not become friends overnight. They shoud not blame him, as he did not, for the remark. Most Hindus held this view. What he wanted his Muslim League friends to do was to live down the Sardar's remark and by their conduct, not declarations, disprove it. Let it be remembered that Panditji though he had not the same method and manner as the Sardar claimed him as his valued colleague. If the Sardar was an enemy of the Muslims, Panditji could ask him to retire. The Sardar had not ceased to be his (Gandhiji's) esteemed friend though he was no longer his "yes man" as he was once popularly and affectionately nicknamed. His friends should also know the character of the Cabinet. It was responsible for every official act of every member of the Cabinet. He expected a thorough cleansing of hearts. That being assured, there would be mutual respect and trust.

They were all of the Union and by right it beonged to them. He could not break the fast for less. They must dethrone Satan from their hearts and enthrone God.

Duty of the Hindus and Sikhs

What was the duty of the Hindus and Sikhs? They had just heard Gurudev's favourite song, "If no one responds to your call, walk alone, walk alone," He liked it very much and it was sung almost every day during his walking pilgrimage in Noakhali. He would repeat with his last breath that the Hindus and the Sikhs should be brave enough to say that whatever happened in Pakistan, they would not raise their little finger against a single Muslim in the Union. They would never again indulge in cowardly acts, however great the provocation.

Delhi on Trial

If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, he would then break the fast. Delhi was the capital of India. The ruin or downfall of Delhi he would regard as the ruin of India and Pakistan. He wanted Delhi to be safe for all Muslims, even for one like Shaheed Suhrawardy, who was looked upon as the chief of *goondas.* Let all proved *goondas* be rounded up. But he (Gandhiji) was witness to the fact that Shaheedsaheb had worked for peace in Calcutta in all sincerity. He had pulled out the Muslims from Hindu houses which they had forcibly occupied. He was living with him. He would willingly join the prayer but Gandhiji would not expose him to the risk of being insulted. He wanted him, as he did every Muslim to feel as safe in Delhi as the tallest of them.

He did not mind how long it took for real peace to be established. Whether it took one day or one month, it was immaterial. No one should say or do anything to lure him into giving up his fast prematurely. The object should not be to save his life. It should be to save India and her honour. He would feel happy and proud when he saw that India's place was not lowered as it had become by the recent happenings which he had no wish to recall.

Birla House, New Delhi, 13-1-'48
Harijan, 18-1-1948

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MY DREAM

Gandhiji had dictated a message to be read out to the prayer audience this afternoon, but later on he decided to go to the meeting and address the gathering. He said that he had come in spite of the doctor's objections. But from the next day he would probably not be able to walk to the prayer ground. He had the strength that day and he used it though the doctors had advised him to conserve it. He was in God's hands. If He wanted him to live he would not die. He did not want his faith in God to weaken.

Spate of Messages

Continuing his speech without any reference to the dictated notes, Gandhiji said, "Cablegrams and telegrams are pouring in from far and near. Some, in my opinion weighty and congratulating me on my resolve and entrusting me to God. Some others in friendliest terms appealing to me to abandon the fast and assuring me that they would befriend their neighbours irrespective of caste and creed and try to carry out the spirit of my message that accompanied the fast. I am asking Shri Pyarelalji to give a few selections, from the abundance which is hourly increasing, to the Press. They are from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. If those who have given me assurances—some of the senders represent associations and groups—carry them out faithfully, they will certainly have contributed largely to the hastening of the stoppage of the fast. Shrimati Mridulaben asks the following question from Lahore, where she is in touch with the Pakistan authorities as also the common Muslims: "There are friends here who are very anxious about Gandhiji's health and are eager to know what Gandhiji would like them to do on this side and what he expects from his Muslim friends in Pakistan, including those who are in political parties and in Governmental service." It is pleasing to think that there are Muslim friends who are anxious about my health and more so to know that they are eager for the information that Shrimati Mridulaben seeks. To all senders of

the messages and to the seekers in Lahore, I wish to say that the fast is a process of self-purification and is intended to invite all who are in sympathy with the mission of the fast themselves to take part in the process of self-purification, whether they are in the service of the Pakistan Government or whether they are members of political parties or others.

A Word to Pakistan

"You have heard of the cowardly attack on the Sikhs in Karachi. Innocent men, women and children were butchered, looted and others have had to flee. Now comes the news of an attack on a refugee train at Gujarat. The train was carrying non-Muslim refugees from the Frontier Province. Large numbers are reported to have been killed and women abducted. It distresses me. How long can the Union put up with such things? How long can I bank upon the patience of the Hindus and Sikhs in spite of my fast? Pakistan has to put a stop to this state of affairs. They must purify their hearts and pledge themselves that they will not rest till the Hindus and Sikhs can return and live in safety in Pakistan.

"Supposing that there is a wave of self-purification throughout India, Pakistan will become *pak*. It will be a State in which past wrongs will have been forgotten, past distinctions will have been buried, the least and the smallest in Pakistan will command the same respect and the same protection of life and property that the Qaid-e-Azam enjoys. Such a Pakistan can never die. Then and not till then shall I repent that I ever called it a sin, as I am afraid I must hold today, it is. I want to live to see that Pakistan not on paper, not in the orations of Pakistani orators, but in the daily life of every Pakistani Muslim. Then the inhabitants of the Union will forget that there ever was any enmity between them, and if I am not mistaken, the Union will proudly copy Pakistan, and if I am alive I shall ask her to excel Pakistan in well-doing. The fast is a bid for nothing less. Be it said to the shame of those of us who are in the Union that we have readily copied Pakistan's bad manners.

My Dream

"Before I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall

jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life. The wish for living the full span of life portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realization of such a dream? Then we shall have real Swaraj. Then though legally and geographically we may still be two States, in daily life no one will think that we were separate States. The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true. Yet like a child in a famous picture, drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy till I have got it. I live and want to live for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible. A goal ceases to be one, when it is reached. The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads: 'If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That Fort with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I shoud love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions, as mother, sister or daughter according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers. I hope everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy. Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never

realized and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if he wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart Divine Will."

Birla House, New Delhi, 14-1-'48
Harijan, 18-1-1948

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FROM THE POST-PRAYER SPEECHES—I

Gandhiji was too weak to walk to the prayer ground this evening. In his spoken message at the radio microphone by his bed he appealed to the people not to bother as to what the others were doing. Each one of them should turn the searchlight inwards and purify his or her heart as far as possible. He was convinced that if the people sufficiently purified themselves they would help India and help themselves and also shorten the period of his fast. None should be anxious for him. They should think out how best they could improve themselves and work for the good of the country. All must die some day. No one could escape death. Then why be afraid of it ? In fact death was a friend which brought deliverance from suflerings.

Killing by Inches

In his dictated message Gandhiji said :

"Newspaper men sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me, as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work I felt disinclined out of some exhaustion to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Shri Pyarelalji to inform them to excuse me and further tell them that they should put down their questions in writing and send them to me next morning. They did so. This is the first question :

'Why have you undertaken the fast when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion ?'

"What was it if it was not a disturbing disturbance for a crowd to make an organized and a determined effort to take forcible possession of Muslim houses? The disturbance was such that the Police had reluctantly to resort to tear gas and even to a little shooting if only overhead, before the crowd dispersed. It would have been foolish for me to wait till the last Muslim had been turned out of Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches."

The Sardar

"The second question is:

'You have stated that you could not give any reply to the Muslims who came to you with their tale of fear and insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer a "yes-man" as he used to be. These factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in the Sardar and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful if you can clear the position.'

"As to this I feel that my reply was precise, not admitting of more interpretation than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I should have dispelled the doubt in anticipation. Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from this self-imposed restraint and I was able to assure the critic that they were wrong in isolating him from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me, whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good. The Sardar had a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurt, though his heart was expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus my statement was meant deliberately to free a life-long and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach. Lest my hearers should go away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my 'yes-man' as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful

to be anybody's 'yes-man'. When he was my 'yes-man', he permitted himself to be so named because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me because as he explained to me he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time I began my public career in India. When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article but a weak copy known as passive resistance. Naturally, passive resistance can avail nothing to a ruler. Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people. He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust. I know that the Sardar could never betray or degrade his trust.

Object of the Fast

"I wonder if with a knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me. Have I not before now said emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? He only can degrade himself. Though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth that it bears repetition on all occasions. My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union, and therefore it is necessarily against the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Union. This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained. I cannot expect the fast taken by a very imperfect and weak mortal, as I truly confess I am, to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger. The fast is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step."

No Room for Distortion

"The third question is:

'Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council and soon after the Karachi riots and the Gujarat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign Press is not known. But undoubtedly, your fast has overshadowed all other incidents. And Pakistan representatives would not be worth their reputation if they do not seize the opportunity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been making the life of the Muslims in India impossible. Truth takes a long time to reach the four corners of the globe. But in the meantime your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our case in the eyes of the United Nations.'

"This question does not demand or need any elaborate answer. From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. Outsiders who are able to take an impartial and unbiassed view of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast, which is meant to bring sanity to all those who inhabit both the Union and Pakistan. It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Shrimati Mridulaben's enquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the newly made two Dominions."

Birla House, New Delhi, 15-1-'48

Grace of God

Before Gandhiji's dictated message was read out to the prayer audience, he addressed them on the microphone from his bed. He said that he had not expected that he would be able to speak to them that day but they would be pleased to learn that if anything, his voice was less feeble that day than the day before. He could not explain it except for the grace

of God. He had never felt so well on the fourth day of the fast in the past. If all of them continued to participate in the process of self-purification, he would probably have the strength to speak to them till the end. He was in no hurry to break the fast. Hurry would spoil matters. He did not want anyone to come and tell him that things had been set right while the process was incomplete. If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, it would have its repercussions all over the country. He had no wish to live unless peace reigned in the two Dominions.

Unmixed Goodwill

In his message to the prayer gathering Gandhiji said:

"It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate settled policy. Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, has with equal deliberation yet promptness unsettled their settled fact*. They deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Camorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim this gesture as one which only a large-hearted Cabinet like ours could rise to. This is no policy of appeasement of the Muslims. This is a policy, if you like, of self-appeasement. No Cabinet worthy of being representative of a large mass of mankind can afford to take any step merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause of an unthinking public. In the midst of insanity, should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of State under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast they could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do. But the present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question, but of all the differences between the two Dominions. Friendship should replace the present enmity. Demands of equity supersede the letter of law. There is a homely maxim of law which has been in practice for

* The Government of India had decided to implement the financial agreement between India and Pakistan, only after the Kashmir dispute had ended. This annoyed the Government of Pakistan greatly, which wanted the agreement put into effect at once. When Gandhiji began his fast to bring about communal unity, the Government of India changed its earlier policy, as a gesture of goodwill to Pakistan, and decided to implement the agreement immediately in accordance with Pakistan's demand. —Ed.

centuries in England that when common law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue. Not long ago there were even separate courts for the administration of law and of equity. Considered in this setting, there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government. If we want a precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award. That Award was really the unanimous judgment of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. It was undone overnight as a result of the fast undertaken in Yeravda prison.

Fittest Answers to Fast

"I have been asked to end the fast because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish I could persuade myself to do so. I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable sacrifice, meticulously examine me from day to day are getting more and more anxious as the fast is prolonged. Because of defective kidney function they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse as permanent after-effects of any further prolongation. I did not embark upon the fast after consultation with medical men, be they however able. My sole guide, even dictator, was God, the Infallible and Omnipotent. If He has any further use for this frail body of mine, He will keep it in spite of the prognostications of medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say that I dread neither death nor permanent injury, even if I survive. But I do feel that this warning of medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks. And like brave men and women, that we ought to be under hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust. The letter of my vow will be satisfied if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the Dominions seem to have instinctively realized that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two Dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either

Dominion without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less. It will be wrong for the rest of the two Dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi. After all, the inhabitants of the Union are not superhuman. In the name of the people, our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter gesture? The ways are many if there is the will. Is it there?"

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-1-'48

Cleansing of Hearts

"I repeat what I have said before—nothing is to be done under pressure of the fast. I have observed before that things done under pressure of a fast have been undone after the fast is over. If any such thing happens, it would be a tragedy of the highest degree. There is no occasion for it at any time. What a spiritual fast does expect is cleansing of the heart. The cleansing, if it is honest, does not cease to be when the cause which induced it ceases. The cleansing of a wall seen in the form of a whitewash does not cease when the dear one has come and gone. This material cleansing is bound to require renovation after some time. Cleansing of the heart once achieved only dies with one's death. Apart from this legitimate and laudable pressure, the fast has no other function which can be described as proper.

A Word to Pakistan

"The number of telegrams coming from Rajas, Maharajas and the laity continues to increase. There are telegrams from Pakistan too. They are good so far as they go. But as a friend and well-wisher I must say to all those who reside in Pakistan and mould its fortune that they will fail to make Pakistan permanent if their conscience is not quickened and if they do not admit the wrongs for which Pakistan is responsible.

"This does not mean that I do not wish a voluntary re-union, but I wish to remove and resist the idea that Pakistan should be re-united by force of arms. I hope that this will not be misunderstood as a note of discord, whilst I am lying on what is truly a deathbed. I hope all Pakistanis will realize that I would be untrue to them, and to myself if, out of weakness and for fear of hurting their feelings, I failed to convey to them what I truthfully feel. If I am wrong in my estimate, I should be

so told and if I am convinced, I promise that I shall retract what I have said here. So far as I know, the point is not open to question.

Happy in Fasting

"My fast should not be considered a political move in any sense of the term. It is in obedience to the peremptory call of conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony. I call to witness all my numerous Muslim friends in Delhi. Their representatives meet me almost every day to report the day's events. Neither the Rajas and Maharajas nor the Hindus and Sikhs or any others would serve themselves or India as a whole, if at this, what is to me a sacred juncture, they mislead me with a view to terminating my fast. Let them know that I feel never so happy as when I am fasting for the spirit. This fast has brought me higher happiness than hitherto. No one need disturb this happy state, unless he can honestly claim that in his journey he has turned deliberately from Satan towards God."

Birla House, New Delhi, 17-1-'48
Harijan, 25-1-1948

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FROM THE POST-PRAYER SPEECHES—II

The Task Ahead

Speaking on the microphone from his bed at 5-20 p.m. on Sunday, Gandhiji said that he had earlier dictated a message for the prayer audience which would be read out to them.

It was a happy day for him and for all of them. He was glad that due to their kindness he could break his fast on the auspicious day of Guru Govind Singh's birthday anniversary. He could never forget the kindness which was daily being showered on him by the inhabitants of Delhi, the Pakistan sufferers and the Government and administrative authorities, since the fast began. He had experienced the same love at Calcutta. He could not forget the help that he had received from Shaheed Saheb in restoring peace in Calcutta. But for him, he (Gandhiji) would not have stopped in Calcutta. People had

many suspicions about Shaheed Saheb's *bona fides* still. They should forget the past and learn the duty of having friendly feelings towards all and being inimical to none. The crores of Muslims were not all angels nor were all the Hindus and the Sikhs. There were good and bad specimens among all communities. Would they be less than friendly towards the so-called criminal tribes amongst them?

Muslims were a numerous community scattered all over the world. There was no reason why they, who stood for friendship with the whole world, should not be friends with the Muslims. He was not a fortune-teller, but God had given him intellect and understanding enough to know that if for some reason or other they could not be friends with the Muslims of the Union, the Muslims of the whole world would be antagonized and they would lose India. Then India including both the Dominions, would once again pass under foreign domination.

He had received the good wishes and blessings of numberless men and women. He had been assured that the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews, Christians and others who lived in Delhi would all live together as brothers. They would never quarrel among themselves again and in this assurance sufferers from Pakistan had also joined. This was no small matter. If the auspicious beginning was continued, it was bound to ensure peace in India and thence in Pakistan. This was not one man's work, but all, young and old, men and women, had to co-operate sincerely in the effort. If this was not the meaning of the breaking of his fast, he had not done well in breaking it. Then they would have fulfilled the letter and killed the spirit. What was possible in Delhi was possible in the rest of the Union and if communal peace reigned in the whole of the Union, Pakistan was bound to follow suit. They should shed all fear. Every Muslim child should feel safe among the Hindus and Sikhs. Up till now our face was turned towards Satan, now he hoped it would be turned Godward. If they did so, the Union would lead the way to world peace. He did not wish to live for any other purpose. Mere lip-service was no good. They must install God in their hearts. God was one, whatever the name given to Him. The realization of this truth should end all enmity and intolerance.

Let the Hindus decide once for all that they would not quarrel. He would advise the Hindus and the Sikhs to read the *Quran* as they read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb*. To the Muslims he would say that they should read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb* with the same reverence with which they read the *Quran*. They should understand the meaning of what they read and have equal regard for all religions. This was his life-long practice and ideal. He claimed to be a *sanatani* Hindu, though he was not an idolator in the accepted sense. But he could not despise those who worshipped idols. The idol worshipper saw God in the stone image. God was omnipresent. If it was wrong to seek God in a stone how was it right to seek Him in a book called the *Gita*, the *Granth Saheb* or the *Quran* ? Was not that also idol worship ? By cultivating tolerance and respect they would be able to learn from all. Then they would forget the communal differences and live together in peace and amity. The disgraceful incidents where men and women were thrown out of moving trains, would then cease to occur. People would freely and fearlessly move about in the Union. He would never be at peace with himself till Pakistan was just as safe for the Hindus and Sikhs and the Pakistan sufferers could return to their homes with honour and dignity, and the Muslims to theirs in the Union.

Breaking of the Fast

In his written message Gandhiji said :

"I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God. Without living Truth God is nowhere. In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Babu brought over hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. In this very representative company were present Zahid

Hussain Saheb, the High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, General Shah Nawazkhan, representing the Azad Hind Fauj (I. N. A.). Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was of course there, as also Maulana Saheb. Dr. Rajendra Babu read a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, asking me not to put any further strain on them and end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and the Indian Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge that come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship would be to break the nation.

Spirit of the Vow

"As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service of humanity till the last moment. That span according to learned opinion is at least one hundred and twentyfive years, some say one hundred and thirtythree. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled early beyond expectation, through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh. The result could not be otherwise when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands. Telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world. Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine? But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit without which the letter killeth. The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan. If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan. But if the night in the Union is dispelled

beyond the shadow of a doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, nor are signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us as He has visibly guided us during all these six days."

Birla House, New Delhi, 18-1-'48

Congratulations and Concern

"My thanks go out to the senders of numerous wires from all over the world from Indians and non-Indians expressing their goodwill and anxiety. These show the correctness of the step I had taken. Not that I had the slightest doubt about it. I had none about this as I never have had about the reality that God Is and that His most graphic name is Truth. Now has begun a stream of wires of congratulations heaving relief. These friends will forgive me for not sending personal acknowledgments. It is physically impossible to do so. I hope too that no such acknowledgment is expected by the senders. I feel constrained to single out two — one from the Premier of the West Punjab and the other from the Nawab Saheb of Bhopal. They are today labouring under grave distrust. Let the extracted passages speak for themselves. If the senders were not sincere, they would have spared themselves and me on the solemn occasion that the fast was.

Here is the one from the Nawab Saheb of Bhopal:

> "Your appeal for a reunion of hearts of all communities cannot fail to find support from all people of goodwill in both Dominions as will also any appeal for an understanding and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. We in Bhopal have been able happily to face our troubles during the past year in a spirit of concord, amity and goodwill between all communities with the result that not a single untoward incident has occurred to mar the peace of the State. We assure you that we shall strive to further this friendly spirit with all our strength at our command."

I give the full text of the wire from the Premier of the West Punjab:

> "The West Punjab Ministry expresses deep admiration and sincere appreciation for your great gesture for the furtherance of a noble cause. This Ministry has always stood for the principle of doing everything possible to protect the lives, honour

and property of the minorities, and giving them equal rights of citizenship. We assure you that this Ministry will follow this policy with redoubled vigour. We are anxious to see an immediate improvement in the situation throughout the Indian subcontinent which may enable you to break your fast. No efforts will be spared in this province to help in saving a life as precious as yours."

A Warning

"In this age of senseless imitation my warning is that it would be foolish for anybody to embark on such a fast expecting identical results in an identically short space of time. If anyone does, he will face severe disappointment and will discredit what is a hoary and infallible institution. Two severe qualifications are necessary — a living faith in God and a felt peremptory call from Him. I am tempted to add a third, but it is superfluous. A peremptory call from God within presupposes the rightness, timeliness and propriety of the cause for which the fast is taken. It follows that a long previous preparation is required. Let no one, therefore, lightly embark on such a fast.

Task before Them

"The citizens of Delhi and the refugees have a heavy task in front of them. Let them seek occasions for meeting together as often as possible in perfect mutual trust. It was a soul stirring sight for me to meet Muslim sisters in large numbers yesterday. Girls in my party told me that the sisters were sitting in Birla House uncertain whether they could come to me. They were in purdah, most of them. I asked them to be brought in and they came. I suggested that they would not have the purdah before their fathers or brothers. Why should they think me less? And off went the purdah without exception. This is not the first time that the purdah has disappeared before me. I mention the incident to illustrate what genuine love, as I claim mine to be, is able to do. Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports. Not only should there be no boycott of Muslims but they should be induced to resume their previous occupations. Delhi is poorer for the disappearance of the exquisite workmanship of the Muslims.

It is a miserable and miserly thing for the Hindus and the Sikhs to wish to take away from them their means of livelihood. On the one hand there should be no monopoly and on the other there should be no attempt at deprivation. In this great country of ours there is room for all. The Peace Committees that have been formed must not go to sleep as many committees unfortunately do in all countries. The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all the communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms but that of love than which there is no better cement to be found in the world."

Birla House, New Delhi, 19-1-'48
Harijan, 25-1-1948

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THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

The feverish anxiety into which the whole city of Delhi and the country at large had been plunged was terminated when Gandhiji broke his fast at Birla House, New Delhi, today at 12-45 p.m. with due solemnity. Earlier in the day, representatives of all the important groups and organizations in the city, including representatives of the refugees and from the three worst affected parts of the city, namely, Karol Bagh, Sabzi Mandi and Paharganj, had assembled under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the latter's residence and put their signatures to a seven-point declaration covering the conditions laid down by Gandhiji for breaking his fast. The document was recorded in both the Persian and Devanagari scripts at Gandhiji's special insistence. At the meeting were also present Maulana Azad Saheb and Major General Shah Nawazkhan. Delhi Muslims were represented by Maulanas Hifzur Rahman and Ahmed Saeed of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Maulana Habib-ur-Rahman. Goswami Shri Ganesh Datt, Shri Basantlal and Shri Narain Das represented the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. There were too the representatives of the various Sikh organizations. They then all repaired (numbering over 100) to Birla House, where they assembled in Gandhiji's room, to request him to break the fast. Maulana Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlalji had arrived there already and

Janab Zahid Hussain Saheb, the Pakistan's High Commissioner, came in a little later.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad opened the proceedings by narrating to Gandhiji how they had all assembled on the previous night at the former's residence and after full discussion decided to sign the declaration then and there. But as representatives of some organizations were not present in that meeting, they felt that they should not go to Gandhiji immediately with the signed document but wait till the remaining signatures were obtained. They had accordingly met again in the morning when all those who were absent during the previous night's meeting came and gave their signatures. It was found in the course of the morning meeting, Dr. Rajendra Prasad reported, that even those who had some lingering doubts on the previous night were now confident that they could ask Gandhiji with a full sense of their responsibility to break the fast. As the President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that he had signed the document in view of the guarantee which they had all jointly and severally given. Janab Khurshid, the Chief Commissioner, and Shri Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, who were present, had signed the document on behalf of the administration. It had been decided to set up a number of committees to implement the pledge. Dr. Rajendra Prasad hoped that Gandhiji would now terminate his fast.

Shri Deshabandhu Gupta, speaking next, described some touching scenes of fraternization between the Hindus and Muslims which he had witnessed when a procession of about 150 Muslims was taken out that morning in Sabzi Mandi and was received with ovation and offered fruit and refreshments by the Hindu inhabitants of that locality.

Gandhiji replying said that what they had told him had touched him deeply. They had given him all that he had asked for. But if their words meant that they held themselves responsible for communal peace in Delhi only and what happened in other places was no concern of theirs, then their guarantee was nothing worth and he would feel and they too would one day realize that it was a great blunder on his part to have given up his fast. As an illustration he referred to the report of the happenings in Allahabad that had appeared in the Press. Repre-

sentatives of both the R.S.S. and the Hindu Mahasabha were among the signatories to the seven-point declaration. If they were sincere in their professions, surely, they could not be indifferent to outbreaks of madness in places other than Delhi. It would be a fraud upon God if they did so. Delhi was the heart of the Indian Dominion and they (the representatives gathered there) were the cream of Delhi. If they could not make the whole of India realize that the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were all brothers, it would bode ill for the future of both the Dominions. What would happen to Hindustan if they quarrelled with one another?

Here Gandhiji broke down owing to overwhelming feeling as he explained on resumption. What he had said was repeated aloud by one or two friends sitting near him.

Resuming his remarks after the interval, Gandhiji again appealed to them to search well their hearts so that they might not take any step which they would have to regret afterwards. The occasion demanded of them bravery of the highest order. They should clearly realize the implications of their pledge. It was nothing less than that what they had achieved in Delhi had to be realized in the whole of India. That did not mean that the ideal could be realized in a day. But it did mean that whilst in the past they had turned their face towards Satan, they had now resolved to turn it Godward. If, in their hearts, they did not accept what he had placed before them or if they had made up their minds that it was beyond them, they should plainly tell him so.

There could be nothing more wrong on their part, continued Gandhiji, than to hold that Hindustan belonged only to the Hindus and the Muslims could have no place in it, or on the reverse that Pakistan belonged to the Muslims only and the Hindus and Sikhs could have no place in it. He wanted the refugees to understand that if they set things right in Delhi, as he had suggested, that was the only way to set things right in Pakistan too. He reminded them that he was not a man to shirk another fast, should he afterwards discover that he had been deceived or had deceived himself into breaking it prematurely. They should, therefore, act with circumspection and cent per cent sincerity. He invited the representatives of Mussalmans

who had been meeting him frequently to tell him whether they were satisfied that the conditions in Delhi were now such as to warrant breaking the fast on his part.

Addressing next a few words to the Muslims especially, he asked if there was any ground for the suspicion that the Muslims did not regard India as their country. They lived in it in the midst of the Hindus because they could not help it, but one day they had to part company. He hoped that that suspicion was baseless. Similarly, if there was a Hindu who regarded the Muslims as *yavanas* or *asuras* incapable of realizing God, he was guilty of the worst blasphemy, which could possibly have no room in the covenant which they had signed.

He then referred to a book which a Muslim friend had lovingly presented him at Patna. In that book the writer had propounded that according to the *Quran*, *kafirs* (i.e. Hindus) were worse than poisonous reptiles and fit only to be exterminated. Not only was there no sin in using every conceivable variety of force or fraud to compass that end, it was meritorious in the eyes of God. He was sure that no God-fearing Muslims could subscribe to or even secretly sympathize with that creed. Some dubbed Hindus as image worshippers, proceeded Gandhiji. But it was not the stone image which they worshipped but the God within, without Whom not a particle of matter existed. If a devotee saw God in an image, it was not a thing for anyone to cavil at. Granting that his belief was a delusion, it deluded nobody but himself. It required magnanimity and breadth of outlook to understand and appreciate the religious convictions and practices of others. It was the same thing if they considered the *Quran* or the *Granth Saheb* as God.

Concluding, Gandhiji remarked that if they fully accepted the implications of their pledge, they should release him from Delhi so that he might be free to go to Pakistan. In his absence they should welcome such refugees from Pakistan as might want to return to their homes. The latter were none too happy over there just as the Hindus in the Indian Dominion were none too happy to lose large numbers of Muslim artisans and craftsmen. It was not easy to reproduce in a day traditional skill that had been acquired through generations. It was a loss on both sides which no sane people would like willingly to perpetuate.

Gandhiji ended by once more asking them to turn the searchlight inward and not to deceive themselves or others by asking him to give up his fast, if what he had said did not find a responsive echo in their hearts.

Maulana Saheb Abdul Kalam Azad, being next asked to say something, remarked that so far as the guarantee of communal peace was concerned it could be given only by the representatives of the citizens of Delhi. He, however, did not want to leave unchallenged the Muslim friends' observation to which Gandhiji had referred, as it referred to the teachings of Islam. He had no hesitation in characterizing it as a libel on Islam. He quoted a verse from the *Quran* which was to the effect that all mankind are brethren, irrespective of their race or religion. The remarks to which Gandhiji had referred were abhorrent to the teachings of Islam. They were only indicative of the insanity that had of late, seized some sections of the people.

He was followed by Maulana Hifzur-Rahman Saheb, who categorically repudiated the allegation that his co-religionists did not regard India as their country which claimed their full and undivided allegiance, but only as a place where they were forced to live by expediency and by the compulsion of circumstances. Their thirty years' unbroken record of service of the nationalist cause gave the lie to that charge. They regarded it as an insult to their nationalism to be asked to reiterate their loyalty to India. He recalled how during the recent disturbances at one stage their Congress friends and colleagues had offered to provide a safe asylum to them outside Delhi as they were not sure that they would be able to give them adequate protection in Delhi. But they had declined that offer and had preferred to stay in and go about the city without any police escort, trusting to God alone. Speaking of the Jamiat, he could say that its members were staunch followers of Maulana Azad Saheb and the Congress. Those who had left for Pakistan had done so out of fear for their lives and worse. They all wanted to remain in India as citizens of India with self-respect and honour, in their own right, not on the mercy or sufferance of anybody. He asserted that if India were to be attacked they would all defend it to the last man as their country. They had

plainly said on more than one occasion that those who were not prepared to do so should leave India and go to Pakistan.

Describing next the change that had come over the city as a result of Gandhiji's fast, he said that they regarded it as a happy augury and a presage of things to come. They were satisfied that the tide had definitely turned and was now fast flowing in the direction of communal harmony and peace when previously bitterness and hatred ran riot. Now that the administration had underwritten the assurance given by the representatives of the people, they were satisfied that they would be implemented, though it might take some time. He, therefore, joined Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his appeal that Gandhiji should break the fast.

After Shri Ganesh Datt had on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. reiterated that appeal Janab Zahid Hussain Saheb addressed a few words to Gandhiji. He was there, he said, to convey to Gandhiji how deeply concerned the people in Pakistan were about him and how they were daily inundating him wtih anxious inquiries about his (Gandhiji's) health. It was their heart's desire that circumstances might soon prevail which would enable him to break the fast. If there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan.

Janab Zahid Hussain Saheb was followed by Janab Khurshid and Shri Randhawa who on behalf of the administration reiterated the assurance that all the conditions mentioned in the citizens' pledge would be duly implemented, and no effort would be spared to restore to the Indian capital its glorious old tradition of communal harmony and peace.

Sardar Harbans Singh endorsed on behalf of the Sikhs what his predecessors had said. Gandhiji then expressed his readiness to break the fast, which was done with the usual ceremony of prayer at which texts from the Japanese, Muslim and Parsi scriptures were recited followed by the *mantra* :

> "Lead me from untruth to truth,
> From darkness to light,
> From death to immortality."

A Hindustani hymn and the Christian hymn : "When I survey the wondrous cross", were then sung by the girl inmates of the

ashram followed by *Ramadhun.* A glass of fruit juice was handed by Maulana Saheb and Gandhiji broke the fast after fruit was distributed to and partaken by all present.

New Delhi, 18-1-'48
Harijan, 25-1-1948

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FROM THE LAST POST-PRAYER SPEECHES

A Plea for Sanity

Gandhiji said that Delhi had done a great thing and he hoped that the signatories to the Peace Pledge had given their signature with God in the form of Truth as their witness. He had heard that there was a repudiation of the pledge on behalf of an official of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was sorry. If the inhabitants of Delhi and the refugees in the capital would remain steadfast and not be swayed by happenings elsewhere, they would save India and also Pakistan. Delhi was an ancient city. If Delhi acted truthfully and non-violently, the effects of its action would be felt all the world over. If they would carefully read the Sardar's speech at Bombay, they would realize that there was no difference in outlook between the Sardar, Panditji and himself. They were all working for the same end although they might express it differently. None of them was the enemy of the Mussalmans. Enmity towards the Muslims amounted to enmity towards India. The least he expected them to do was not to take the law into their own hands and commit inhuman acts. That would mean the end of society. They were bound as respectable citizens to leave justice in the hands of their chosen Government. They and their newspapers were never tired of condemning in unmeasured terms the acts of those Americans as barbarous who lynched Negroes. Did similar acts on their part become less barbarous?

Gandhiji next referred to his statement that he might now proceed to Pakistan. But that, he said, could only happen if the Pakistan Government were convinced that he (Gandhiji) was a man of peace and a friend of the Muslims and would,

therefore, like him to go to Pakistan. He would, however, in any case, have to wait till the doctors declared him fit to undertake the journey.

Prime Minister's Noble Gesture

Referring to the sufferings of the Hindu and Sikh refugees Gandhiji said that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was doing all that was possible in order to bring them speedy relief. His heart bled for them. He was a man who would offer his own bedding to one in distress and pace up and down the whole night in order to keep himself warm. His house was full. Being the Prime Minister of India he had to accommodate guests, both Indians and foreigners. Still he had expressed a wish to offer one or two rooms in his house to lodge refugees. He expected other Ministers, officials and men of means to do likewise. He (Gandhiji) was convinced that this act of self-sacrifice on the part of India's foremost leader would be appreciated all the world over and put a speedy end to the sufferings of the homeless refugees. It should gladden their hearts to note that this beautiful land of theirs had produced such great men, endowed with such a wonderful spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Jawahar was a real *jawahar* (gem) and there were others, only not so lustrous perhaps. If their leaders were doing all this for the people, it behoved them not to hurt their Muslim brethren. To hurt them was to hurt their leaders.

The Kashmir Issue

Gandhiji referred to a telegram that he had received from Lahore. The sender had signed himself as President, Kashmir Freedom League, and had written as follows:

> "Highly appreciate your magnanimous gesture for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kashmir is the root cause of the present tension and a stumbling block in way of any rapprochement. Must receive top priority if peace actually desired. Withdrawal of aggressive Indian troops from Kashmir and handing it over to whomever it rightfully belongs is the only satisfactory solution of the problem."

It hurt him. If the Kashmir issue was not settled, would the Muslims continue to look upon the Hindus and Sikhs as their enemies and *vice versa*? The army of the Indian Union had not entered Kashmir on their own. So far as he was aware,

they had gone there at the call of the ruler of the State and the leader of the Kashmiri Muslims, Sheikh Abdullah. If the invaders, tribesmen and others would withdraw, and the issue was left to the rebels in Poonch and the rest of Kashmir, and they did not secure any aid from outside, it would be time to ask the Indian Union to withdraw its troops. The suggestion that Kashmir should go to whomsoever it rightfully belonged was perfectly true. And who were the rightful owners of Kashmir? The Maharaja was there and the Indian Government could not ignore him. Ultimately it was for the people of Kashmir to decide their own fate. Hence the idea of referendum.

Gwalior Muslims

Next Gandhiji read out a telegram that some Gwalior Muslim had sent to him from Ratlam. It said:

> "We Muslim inhabitants Jahangirpur, District Ujjain, Gwalior, request your honour that on 15th and 16th instant our village was surrounded by Hindu party who beat us seriously. Several injured, one died. Our crops and houses destroyed. Officer of State not taking any action. We are in danger. Kindly arrange urgently."

If the report was correct, it was a matter of sorrow for them. All breach of communal peace in any corner of India should make them and their Government hang their heads in shame.

Birla House, New Delhi, 20-1-1948

Bomb at the Prayer

Speaking after prayers on Wednesday evening, Gandhiji referred to the previous day's bomb explosion in the Birla House compound. He had been receiving anxious enquiries and praise for being unruffled at the accident. He thought that it was military practice and, therefore, nothing to worry about. He had not realized till after the prayers that it was a bomb explosion and that the bomb was meant against him. God only knew how he would have behaved in front of a bomb aimed at him and exploding. Therefore, he deserved no praise. He would deserve a certificate only if he fell as a result of such an explosion and yet retained a smile on his face and no malice against the doer. What he wanted to say was that no one

should look down upon the misguided youth who had thrown the bomb. He probably looked upon Gandhiji as an enemy of Hinduism. After all, had not the *Gita* said that whenever there was an evil-minded person damaging religion, God sent some one to put an end to his life ? That celebrated verse had a special meaning. The youth should realize that those who differed from him were not necessarily evil. The evil had no life apart from the toleration of good people. No one should believe that he or she was so perfect that he or she was sent by God to punish evil-doers, as the accused seemed to flatter himself he was.

He (Gandhiji) had heard that the youth had without permission occupied a *masjid* for lack of other accommodation and now that the police were getting all mosques evacuated, he resented the act. It was a wrong thing on his part to have occupied the *masjid* in the first place and it was doubly wrong to defy the authorities, who asked him to vacate it.

Ill Serving Hinduism

To those who were at the back of the youth, he would appeal to desist from such activity. That was not the way to save Hinduism. Hinduism could be saved only by Gandhiji's method. Gandhiji had practised Hinduism from early childhood. His nurse had taught him to invoke Rama when he feared evil spirits. Later on he had come in contact with Christians, Muslims and others and, after making a fair study of other religions, had stuck to Hinduism. He was as firm in his faith today as in his early childhood. He believed God would make him an instrument of saving the religion that he loved, cherished and practised. In any case, one had to have constant practice and acquaintance with the fundamentals of religion before being qualified for becoming God's instrument.

Pity the Bomb Thrower

Continuing Gandhiji said that some Sikh friends came and said that he (Gandhiji) should not think that the Sikhs had anything to do with the deed. He knew that the youth was not a Sikh. But what did it matter whether he was a Sikh or a Hindu or a Muslim ? He wished well to all perpetrators. He had told the Inspector General of Police also, not to harass him

in any way. They should try to win him over and convert him to right thinking and doing. He hoped that the youth and his guides would realize their error. For, it was a wrong done to Hinduism and the country. At the same time Gandhiji warned his hearers against being angry with the accused. He did not know that he was doing anything wrong. They should pity him. If they harboured resentment against Gandhiji's fast and had still pledged themselves to maintain peace in order to save an old servant of the nation, the guilt was theirs, not that of the young man who had thrown the bomb. If, on the other hand, they had signed the Peace Pledge whole-heartedly, persons like the young man were ultimately bound to come to their way of thinking.

Gandhiji said that he expected the audience to go on with the prayers in spite of bomb explosions or a shower of bullets. He was glad to learn that a poor unlettered woman was the cause of the arrest of the miscreant. If the heart was sound, if there was right thought, lack of letters was not of any consequence. He congratulated the unlettered sister on her simple bravery.

Bahawalpur and Sind

Next he referred to a note from the Bahawalpur sufferers. He had not forgotten them. Even that very day he had received a telegram from the Nawabsaheb of Bahawalpur saying that he was doing everything possible for the welfare of the non-Muslims in his State. He (Gandhiji) was pursuing the matter in his own way.

Gandhiji narrated a telegram that he had received from the Sindhi Sikh refugees at Bombay. They said that 15,000 Sikhs scattered about in Sind were in danger of extermination. Their life, religion and culture were in danger. Arrangements should be made for their speedy evacuation. Gandhiji could never tolerate the extermination of the Sikhs and would do for them all that was possible for one man to do. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Government was also fully alive to their responsibility. He called upon the Sind Government and the Pakistan Government to reassure the Sikh residents there that they would protect them with their own lives. If they could not guarantee their protection, they should gather them in one place and make

arrangements for their speedy and safe evacuation. The Sikhs were a brave community. They should know that everyone's honour and religion were safe only in one's own hands. No one else could rob one of these. Parsi friends of his had gone to Sind that day.

A Misleading Analogy

Gandhiji then referred to a letter written to him during his fast. The writer had said that while Gandhiji was in jail in 1942, the country had somewhat taken to violence. If Gandhiji died of the fast, there would be such a violent upsurge in the country that it would stagger humanity. Therefore, the writer had argued that for the sake of humanity he should give up his fast. Gandhiji said that while it was true that the people had resorted to violence when he was locked up in jail, he did not think that his death under a fast should have the feared result. But he had rehearsed before embarking on the fast the possibility of a wide fratricide. The Yadavas had destroyed each other before Lord Krishna's death. But he (Gandhiji) was too insignificant a mortal, to produce such an effect. However, if the people had become indolent and vicious like the Yadavas and God saw that there was no way out but extermination, he might make even an ordinary person like him, the instrument of such a catastrophe. Having left himself in God's hands, he worried no more about the consequences. What, however, he saw during the fast nerved him to hope that India had no such self-destruction in store for her.

Lastly, he expressed satisfaction at the way the Muslims were freely moving about in Delhi. He wanted them to continue the process of self-purification and convert their hearts into temples of the living God of Truth.

Birla House, New Delhi, 21-1-1948

For the first time after the fast Gandhiji was able to walk to the prayer ground this evening. He said in his post-prayer speech that he was slowly gaining strength and God willing hoped to return to his normal health before long.

Poverty No Shame

A difficulty to which his attention was drawn was that while the Congress had been in the wilderness it had set before the

people the ideal of service, self-denial and simplicity. In those days it was difficult to collect even a lakh of rupees. Today, the Congress Government was in charge of crores of rupees and could raise as much as it liked. Were they to spend it as if there was no change from foreign rule to indigenous rule? Some people seemed to think that India's leaders and ambassadors must live and spend money in a style befitting their independent status and vie with independent America and England in stylishness. They thought that such expenditure was necessary in order to uphold India's prestige in foreign countries. Gandhiji did not think so. There was no merit in hiding our poverty. India's status in the world depended upon her moral supremacy which her passive resistance had brought her. In this she had no rival as yet, for the other nations, great or small, were proud of their armaments and military valour. That was their capital. India possessed only her moral capital, which increased with the spending. On any other condition the Congress claim to revolutionize values, when they came into power, would be forfeited. People criticized the Ministers for accepting high salaries and not bringing the artificial British standard down to the natural Indian standard. These critics knew nothing of the private life of their Ministers. But the fashion was for Congressmen and others to expect high emoluments wholly out of keeping with what one was making out of office. One who managed to live on Rs. 150 per month would not hesitate to demand and expect Rs. 500. Such persons felt that they would not be appreciated unless they demanded high salaries and lived in the old Civil Service style and dressed up as such. That was not the way to serve India. They should not forget that a man's value did not depend upon the amount of money that he earned. The process of self-purification, which they all must share, demanded right thought and action.

Birla House, New Delhi, 22-1-'48

Netaji's Birthday

Today being the anniversary of Subhasbabu's birthday Gandhiji referred to it in his post-prayer speech. He said that he generally did not remember such dates, nor did he attach much value to dates of birth and death. He did not know whe-

ther it was right or wrong for him to be so indifferent. But he was just reminded of the day and he was glad that there was special reason to take note of Subhasbabu's birthday in spite of the fact that the deceased patriot had believed in violence, while he (Gandhiji) believed in non-violence. But he would not forget at this time that it was Subhasbabu who knew no provincialism nor communal differences. He had in his brave army men and women drawn from all over India without distinction, and evoked affection and loyalty which very few have been able to evoke. A lawyer friend asked him for a good definition of Hinduism. Though he was a *sanatani* Hindu, he was unable to define Hinduism. Gandhiji replied that he had forgotten his law for years. Nor was he learned in the science of religion. But as a lay man he could say that Hinduism regarded all religions as worthy of respect. Subhasbabu was, in his opinion, such a Hindu. In memory of that great patriot, they should cleanse their hearts of all communal bitterness.

A Plea for Caution

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to what he had said about communal trouble in a Gwalior village. He had been investigating the matter and had just received a telegram from one who had personally visited the village in question, saying that the information conveyed to him regarding looting, arson and killing of the Muslims in the village of Jehangirpur was quite wrong. It was true that there was a personal private quarrel which could not be stretched into a communal question. And in no case was there arson or loss of life. Gandhiji said that the telegram gladdened him. He advised his Muslim friends to be most careful about sending complaints. They should meticulously avoid all exaggeration. The golden rule in life was to exaggerate one's own faults and belittle those of others. That was the only way to self-purification. Those who indulged in exaggeration would discredit their community.

How to Deal with Traitors

Gandhiji had received a telegram from Meerut. It said that they had no ill feelings against the Nationalist Muslims, but they did not believe that those League Muslims who, until yesterday, had been collecting arms and even now intended to help Pakis-

tan, could ever be loyal to the Union. He (Gandhiji) would have to repent if he put his trust in them. They also said that religion and politics were quite separate and non-violence could never work in politics.

It was rather late in the day to tell him, he said, that non-violence could not work in politics. In politics they could not begin with distrust. Those in charge of the Government were men of great courage and self-sacrifice. They would deal with traitors when the occasion came. Traitors might be found in any community and not only among the Muslims. They had decided to live with the Muslims as brothers and he wanted them to stick to their resolve. All Leaguers were not bad. They should report against those who indulged in questionable activities and let the Government deal with them as severely as it liked. They must on no account take the law into their own hands. That would be barbarous.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-1-'48

Exchange of Prisoners — Abductees

Gandhiji then read from a letter received by him complaining that while the inter-Dominion agreement for the restoration of abducted women prisoners was duly honoured in the earlier stages, it was not being implemented now. He was informed that the West Punjab Government had demanded as a condition precedent that the States should also fall in line. Gandhiji had no objection to such a wish, but if it was a fresh condition, it was not proper. Friendship demanded that all prisoners and women should be returned to either Dominion without regard to their number. The number of abducted women kept in the West Punjab might be larger, but so long as there was one such sister in the East Punjab, it would be sinful to withhold her from her kith and kin. Why should there be a competition in wrong behaviour ? Gandhiji suggested that there should be complete forgetting of the past if there was a thorough inward cleansing. He had noticed with much pain that each Dominion accused the other of bad faith. If they were to give a good account of themselves, this thing had to stop.

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-1-'48

All Quiet in Delhi

Gandhiji proceeded to say that assurances were daily pouring in that all was well with Delhi and that there was nothing to worry so far as the communal situation in the city was concerned. It gladdened his heart to be told by his Hindu and Muslim friends that a reunion of hearts was in the course of being established, and that the people were waking up to the truth that it would not be possible for them to pursue their normal avocation if they continued quarrelling among themselves. Having regard to the improved situation he suggested that they might go a step further and that each Hindu and Sikh should make it a point to bring with him at least one Muslim to the prayer gathering.

Urs at Mehrauli

Gandhiji next referred to the annual celebration of the *urs* at Bakhtiar Chishti's *dargah* at Mehrauli which was to commence from the next day. During the riots the *dargah* had been damaged by miscreants and some of the stone lattice work was removed. Efforts had been made during the last few days to effect the repairs so far as it was possible. Previously, both Mussalmans and Hindus used to visit it and take part in the *urs*. If the Hindus could still go there in the same spirit of peace and devotion, it would be a great thing. He hoped that such Muslims as might want to take part in it would be assured the completest security and safety from insult or molestation and that too with the minimum assistance of the police. He would rather that they should all constitute themselves into police for the purpose. The eyes of the whole world were on them, continued Gandhiji. Telegrams were pouring in from all quarters of the globe—from China, from Africa, from Europe, and from America expressing deep appreciation and admiration of what they had done in Delhi. He hoped that they would all so act as to come up to the expectations that had been aroused. The transfer of power on the 15th of August as a result of their passive resistance struggle was a unique event in the history of the world. But then they fell from grace, and Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs behaved towards one another like barbarians. It was, however, he hoped, only a temporary distemper. Their hearts were sound. The fast seemed to have served to throw

out the distemper. He hoped that the cure would be permanent without the possibility of a relapse.

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-1-'48

Independence Day

This day, 26th January, is Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for independence we had not seen nor handled. Now! We have handled it and we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, even if you are not.

What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom, and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well thought out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in number or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick. Yet what are the strikes and a variety of lawlessness but a deferring of the hope? These are symptoms of our sickness and weakness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Capital has neither dignity nor strength compared to labour. These the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society there is no room, no occasion for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence, veiled or unveiled, must be taboo. Strikes in Cawnpore, coal mines or elsewhere mean material loss to the whole society not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me who has been responsible for so many successful strikes. If there be such critics they ought not to forget that then there was neither independence nor the kind of legislation we have now. I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West. Before leaving this topic of the day, let us permit ourselves to hope that

though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

Urs at Mehrauli

Gandhiji described his morning visit to the *Dargah Sharif* at Mehrauli. The *urs* had attracted a large concourse of Muslims and what gladdened Gandhiji was to find an equal number of Hindus and Sikhs. Due to some wild and misleading rumours, however, the attendance of Muslims was thinner than in the previous years. It was a matter of shame that man should have to be afraid of man. Gandhiji was also distressed to see the costly marble trellis damaged. It was no answer to say that similar or worse things had happened in Pakistan. Had we fallen so low as to stoop to such acts of vandalism ? Granting that such incidents had occurred on a larger scale in Pakistan, it would be improper to institute comparisons in evil doing. Even if the whole world did wrong, should we do likewise ? If today Gandhiji took to evil courses, would it not distress them ? For him it would be worse than death. Similarly, they had reason to feel ashamed at the damage done to the *Dargah*. The friend in charge had related to the audience the history of the shrine and Gandhiji felt that it behoved them all to show to such a holy place the veneration due to it.

More Murders in N.W.F.P.

Gandhiji then referred to the news of one hundred and thirty innocent Hindus and Sikhs having been killed at the Parachinar refugee camp in Peshawar by raiders from tribal areas. Anger at such events would be understandable but nevertheless wrong. Gandhiji had warned the congregation at the fair that if there was any secret wish for retaliation, it would be a breach of the solemn pact entered into in their name. It was up to the Dominion Governments to take appropriate action in such matters, but so far as the public was concerned, they should remain unmoved.

Mirpur Victims

Finally, Gandhiji spoke of the plight of the men and women carried away by the raiders in Mirpur — a district of Kashmir.

The captives included young girls who were molested by the raiders and many of whom were reported to have been removed to Pakistan. There should be some code of decency even for raiders and abductions could have no place therein. He appealed to the Pakistan authorities to right the obvious wrong assuming that a correct version was given to him. Pandit Jawaharlalji himself felt sore at heart and the Union Government was doing what was possible. He knew from his study of Islam that it did not countenance such acts. Government machinery moved slow. Dictates of humanity brooked no delay.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-1-'48

Satyagraha in South Africa

Gandhiji referred to the Satyagraha launched by the Indian community in South Africa. Indians in South Africa were not permitted free entry into the various provinces. In defence of their honour as men and women, the Satyagrahis had marched to Volkurst and then motored to Johannesburg where they held a meeting. This was a courageous step and if the people as a whole became Satyagrahis in the right spirit, victory was sure to crown their efforts. In the question of the march the Government had shown a degree of tolerance and not effected any arrests. But with the progress of the movement, it was feared that arrests would follow. So long, however, as the movement was conducted peacefully, there was no reason for the Government to resort to persecution. Why should Whites consider it *infra dig* to talk matters over with non-Whites? Gandhiji suggested that the authorities should contact the Satyagraha leaders and satisfy their reasonable demands. Today, India and Pakistan, just become new Dominions, were entitled to expect friendly treatment from sister Dominions of the Commonwealth. But if the South African Government still treated Indians as inferiors on the score of colour, he had no hesitation in declaring that they would be putting themselves in the wrong. It was unthinkable that Dominions should quarrel among themselves.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-1-'48

Their Servant

Gandhiji next spoke of a deputation of about forty refugees from Bannu, who had called on him in the afternoon. Poor

men, they were in an afflicted state and he prized their *darshan*. As he had other engagements, they were good enough at his request to have their statements recorded by Shri Brijkrishna. One of them, however, exclaimed that they owed their miseries to him and angrily asked him to leave them alone and retire to the Himalayas. Gandhiji asked him at whose bidding he should go. Some were annoyed and a few went to the length of abusing him, while many eulogized his efforts. The only course, therefore, open to him was to follow the dictates of God who spoke to men in the inmost chamber of the heart. There were women too in the company. He regarded them as his brothers or sisters. God was our one true friend. We were entirely in His hands. He would not care to go and enjoy the peace of the mountains but would be content with what peace he could extract from the surrounding turmoil. He, therefore, preferred to stay in their midst, adding that if they all went to the Himalayas, he might follow them as their servant.

Bread Labour

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to the complaints brought to him that the refugees, though provided with food, shelter and clothing, were averse to any work. If a man was in distress, the key to his happiness lay in labour. God did not create man to eat, drink and make merry. The *Gita* taught that one should perform *yagna* (bread labour) and partake of the fruits of that labour. Millionaires who ate without work were parasites. Even they should eat by the sweat of their brow or should go without food. The only permissible exception was the disabled for whom society provided. There was a variety of work for the refugees to do, such as maintaining sanitation including cleaning of latrines, spinning and other crafts. They should learn to make the best of the situation in which they found themselves.

Kisans

Gandhiji then spoke about peasants. If he had his say, our Governor-General and our Premier would be drawn from the *kisans*. In his childhood he had learnt from school books that the *kisans* were heirs to the kingdom of the earth. This applied to those who laboured on the land and ate from what they pro-

duced. Such *kisans* to be worthy of high offices might be illiterate provided they had robust common sense, great personal bravery, unimpeachable integrity and patriotism above suspicion. As real producers of wealth, they were verily the masters while we had enslaved them. It had been suggested to Gandhiji that the higher secretariat posts should also be manned by *kisans*. He would endorse this suggestion provided they were suitable and had knowledge of the work expected of them. When *kisans* of this type were forthcoming, he would publicly ask Ministers and others to make room for them.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-1-'48
Harijan, 8-2-1948

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THE URS AT MEHRAULI

Gandhiji's visit to the *urs* at Mehrauli on Wednesday, the 24th January was redolent of old days. Famed in history as the ancient capital of Prithviraj, Mehrauli is a small, unostentatious village situated amidst idyllic surroundings, seven miles to the south of Delhi. It is the seat of the *Dargah Sharif* of Khwaja Syed Qutbuddin Bhukhtiar — a shrine, ranking in holiness and sanctity second only to the world famous Dargah of Khwaja Mohayuddin Chishty at Ajmer. A great religious fair — *urs* — used to be held here every year which was attended not only by the Muslims from all over India but by the Hindus too, thus reflecting in its own way the catholicity and religious tolerance for which Sufism stands. During the recent disturbances, like many other places, Mehrauli too fell a victim to communal frenzy. It witnessed many a heart-breaking occurrence and the *Dargah Sharif* itself did not escape the violence of sacrilegious hands, the marks of which it still bears. Owing to disturbed conditions it was feared that the annual *urs* might not be held this year. But as a result of Gandhiji's efforts, who had made holding of the *urs* as before, one of the conditions for breaking his fast, all the obstacles were successfully overcome and the *urs* was held with due ceremony on the fixed date. *Sanatani* Hindus and militant Sikhs vied with each other in extending goodwill to the Muslims. They fraternized with them, offering

them flowers and opening free tea-stalls. It was a sight too to see Hindu and Sikh volunteers standing shoulder to shoulder with Muslim volunteers in a common endeavour for social service. The local administration had, in response to Muslim request, made arrangements for running a special bus service to carry the prospective visitors to the *urs* and an all out effort was made to clean up the *Dargah Sharif* itself and its precincts, repairs being effected wherever it was possible.

Never before since the palmy days of the Khilafat struggle was such a vast, fraternal crowd of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs seen in the capital city. Hundreds of Hindu women too were present and the general atmosphere was one of returning confidence and trust. Gandhiji was taken right into the *sanctum sanctorum* and though women are, as a rule, rigidly excluded from the innermost shrine, obviously an exception was made in the case of girl inmates of the Ashram who accompanied Gandhiji, and the party were requested to recite the *Quranic* verses that are daily recited at Gandhiji's evening prayer. Gandhiji was deeply moved at the sight of the wanton damage to the lovely marble screens enclosing the inner shrines, and later in the evening made a feeling reference to it in his post-prayer address.

In a brief address Khwaja Hilal Qutbi who claims to be a lineal descendant of Khwaja Syed Qutbuddin Bukhtiar of the *Dargah Sharif* described how under the benevolent teachings of Sufism, Delhi rulers became votaries of universal toleration and egalitarianism for which Sufism stands and we had the unique phenomenon of the founding of a slave dynasty. Sufism teaches that the measure of a man's love of God is his love and service of His creation. At a time when India had become a cockpit of warring races, cultures, and creeds, Suflsm held aloft the banner of an eclecticism that rose superior to the common prejudices based on race, creed or colour. Shamsuddin Altamash was a disciple of Khwaja Saheb Qutubuddin. His religious preceptor had enjoined on him in the name of Islam that on the Judgment Day God would demand to know if he had meted out even-handed justice to all his Hindu and Muslim subjects and promoted their welfare alike, because the kingdom he ruled over was not his own for enjoyment but a sacred trust from God. If he betrayed that trust in any way or was

guilty of unfair dealings, God would call him to account for it. He was charged to keep before him Hazrat Omar's saying that if the leg of a goat by the bank of the river Nile was wantonly broken, he would be answerable for it to God. Ma'ni Saheb, who is himself Sajjadda Nashin of Ajmer *Dargah Sharif*, while expressing gratitude to Gandhiji for his efforts which made the holding of the *urs* possible, hoped that it would mark the restoration of the era of communal goodwill and harmony to the capital city and enable thousands of Muslims, who had to flee, to return to their homes in the near future.

Gandhiji who had hardly imagined that he would be required to deliver an address on that occasion was deeply touched by the spectacle before him. He had come there on pilgrimage, not to make speeches, he said. Ever since he had heard that it might not be possible to hold the *urs* at Mehrauli as in previous years, he had been deeply distressed over it. It, therefore, gave supreme satisfaction that the citizens of Delhi had risen to the occasion and given a lie to those fears. If the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi thoroughly cleansed their hearts and made up their minds never again to allow fratricidal strife to raise its head, India and Pakistan united in a brotherly bond would together command the respect and regard of the world instead of becoming the butt of the world's ridicule. One could understand division of patrimony as between blood brothers. But did it mean that thereafter they must become enemies? His reply was, no. If they did, the world would set them down as fools. He would go even further and call them uncivilized. When he broke his fast they had pledged themselves to live together in amity and peace — like blood brothers. They should now renew and confirm that pledge. All religions were at bottom one, though they differed in detail and outward form, even like the leaves of a tree. Each leaf has a separate and distinct existence but they are all sprung from and are organically related to the trunk. Again, no two leaves are alike. Yet they never quarrel among themselves. Instead, they dance to the same breeze and emit a sweet symphony together. "I want you to take a vow that you will never again listen to the voice of Satan and abandon the way of brotherliness and peace. Personally I have never known what it is to be communal. To unite all sections and communities that people this vast land of

ours has been my dream ever since my early childhood, and till that dream is realized my spirit can know no rest." He warned them against being carried off their feet by the news of the attack on the Parachinar refugee camp by the trans-border tribals. They must regard it as a test of their faith. It had shocked him. But they must not allow even such incidents to rekindle in their hearts the sentiment of retaliation or revenge. They should instead proclaim to themselves and all concerned that they were out not to demand blood for blood — that was the way to suicide — but to confront with love even the murderer. "It might appear difficult," concluded Gandhiji. "But I do not think so. That is why when I broke my fast I remarked that if only the people of Delhi thoroughly purified their hearts and kept the same pure, Delhi could solve the problem of India. If, on the other hand, they did things which they did not mean, only to prolong the life of an old man like myself, they would verily encompass my death while deluding themselves into the belief that they were saving my life."

New Delhi, 9-2-'48
Harijan, 15-2-1948

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HIS LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

[The following is the constitution, drafted by Gandhiji, for the Congress on the day of his assassination. His intention was to show how the Congress which was till now mainly concerned with achieving political independence may convert itself into an Association for the Service of the People (Lok Sevak Sangh), and work for the establishment of a non-violent society.—Ed.]

Though split into two, India having attatined political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e. as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the ascendency of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and com-

munal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A.I.C.C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every Panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

Two such contiguous Panchayats shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such Panchayats, the fifty first grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second grade leader and so on, the first grade leaders meanwhile working under the second grade leader. Parallel groups of two hundred Panchayats shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of Panchayats electing a second grade leader after the manner of the first. All second grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into Provincial or District Councils, and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)

1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of Khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A.I.S.A. and must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organize the villages so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of *Nayee Talim*, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies:

*1. A. I. S. A.
**2. A. I. V. I. A.
***3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh
†4. Harijan Sevak Sangh
‡5. Goseva Sangh

Finance

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission, from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of the poor man's pice.

New Delhi, 29-1-'48
Harijan, 15-2-1948

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* All India Spinners Association.
** All India Village Industries Association.
*** Society for Basic Education.
† Society for service of "untouchables".
‡ Society for Cow Protection and Improvement.

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